

The peace deal

Leaders fight on two fronts

Unionists/Trimble could face a coup from within his parliamentary party

Ewen MacAskill
in Belfast

ULSTER Unionist leader David Trimble survived one of the most momentous votes in Unionist history at the weekend, but his problems are just beginning. The parliamentary Unionist Party is in open revolt, and yesterday some of his MPs were plotting a coup.

Next weekend he has to sell the peace settlement to 800 members of the party's council, by which time the implications of the deal will have sunk in. On the sidelines, the Rev Ian Paisley and his hard-line Democratic Unionist Party are waiting to exploit any splits. Mr Trimble faces the humiliation of seeing his colleagues campaigning alongside Mr Paisley for a No vote in the referendum campaign.

Mr Trimble is fighting not just an internal party political battle: he is fighting for a deal that will change relationships within Northern Ireland and change fundamentally the nature of Unionism. For senior Ulster Unionists who gathered at their Belfast headquarters at the weekend there were many reminders of the party's long history. Inside the building, topped with a battered Union Flag, are posters, portraits and leaders from election campaigns during the Troubles and back to Sir Edward Carson early this century.

The theme has been constant: resistance to involvement with the Irish Republic. That looks set to change. On Saturday afternoon, the executive of the Ulster Unionists voted 52 to back Mr Trimble's peace settlement. That vote has huge implications, with the potential to create a new Unionism, a realignment that could prepare the party for the 21st century.

Mr Trimble faces formidable opposition, not least from his own parliamentary colleagues. Half the 10 Ulster Unionist MPs are hostile to the peace agreement.

The MP for Lagan Valley, Jeffrey Donaldson, only 35 but tipped as the next leader, is manoeuvring to replace him, distancing himself from the settlement and positioning himself as a bridge between Mr Trimble and the hardliners. Looking distinctly unhappy as Saturday's meeting broke up, the MP said he intended going on holiday for the remainder of the week. Asked if he supported the hardliners, he said: "I am my own man."

Unionist history is full of failed and deposed leaders. Among the more recent Terence O'Neill, James Chichester Clark and Brian Faulkner. Willie Thompson, the hard-line MP for West Tyrone, one

of those who will work for a No vote in next month's referendum, said Mr Trimble's position was not as strong as it used to be. Willie Ross, the equally hardline MP for Londonderry East, opposed going into the peace talks and has seen nothing emerge to change his opinion.

Other dissident MPs include Roy Beggs, Clifford Forsythe and, possibly, the Rev Martin Smyth.

from the younger generation, usually portrayed as more open to change. Mr Trimble predicted a stronger vote in favour of the council than at the executive, though that itself was a convincing 55-23, but he will have to sell them a package that to many Unionists looks less attractive than the failed Sunningdale agreement of 1973.

Mr Paisley and his party, frequently written off but commanding widespread support in the Protestant community in last year's general election, will be appealing to the emotions of Unionists.

Outside the Ulster Unionist Party headquarters on Satur-

about the settlement he had gone along to register his support of the dissident Ulster Unionist MPs.

He felt let down by Mr Trimble: "We rejected Sunningdale, the Downing Street Declaration, the Framework Document and the Anglo-Irish Agreement and we have ended up with a worse agreement."

"We now have a de facto all-Ireland parliament in which the Unionists are entrenched as a minority."

A more extreme, but hardly surprising reaction, came from a flute band, the West Belfast Shankill Protestant Boys' Club, marching only 5

Republicans/Next few days seen as the most crucial in the movement's history

John Mullan
Ireland Correspondent

EASTER 1998 represents one of the highest challenges to Gerry Adams's Sinn Féin and the IRA since 1916. The task for its leadership is to reconcile what was hitherto irreconcilable, while keeping the movement intact.

This week Sinn Féin's executive will meet to discuss what its negotiators won at Stormont, and whether to back the deal. Next week is crunch time: the ard fheis (annual conference) lasting two days in Dublin, when the grassroots gets its say.

One veteran republican, calling the next few days the most crucial in the republican movement's history, said: "It is make your mind up time for the IRA. It is all still in the balance at this stage."

Sinn Féin did better than expected in some areas: the gains of paramilitary prisoners, policing and the equality agenda are all highly marketable, but as far as political change is concerned, it is much less attractive.

The Sinn Féin leadership had long presented its strategy as securing a transitional arrangement towards a united Ireland. It may have won cross-border implementation bodies and a council of ministers drawn from each jurisdiction, but it falls short of the arrangements even in the ill-fated Sunningdale agreement in 1973.

The multi-party negotiations have paved the way for an end to Ireland's constitutional claim on the North and it has set up a Northern Ireland assembly, one which Sinn Féin helped to shape despite its continuing abstentionist policy.

There are hard choices ahead. The first is to decide Sinn Féin's response. It alone of the eight parties refused to affirm backing. It will instead consult, and it enjoys the luxury of dissent.

Sinn Féin's agreement is unnecessary for the deal to be rubber-stamped, but its opposition would create difficulties, not least for its leaders, who staked their reputations on the success of the talks.

The best bet is that Sinn Féin will adopt a policy of vague acquiescence, stressing the many areas which leave it unhappy.

But it cannot take such an approach when it comes to the key question, one which threatens to devastate the republican movement: will it take up seats in the partitionist assembly?

There are reasons for doing so. Sinn Féin is on the up electorally, aided by growing support among the Catholic middle classes prepared to back it during an IRA ceasefire. It will stand in the elec-

tions, and could qualify to have two members on the 12-member executive.

Sinn Féin might even do better than that, depending on how quickly it makes inroads into the ageing SDLP's share of the vote. It is expected shortly to overtake the SDLP, whose recent drive for members is probably too late to arrest its decline.

There would be an added attraction. It could pave the

Thompson, the hardline Ulster Unionist, unexpectedly defeated Pst Doherty last year, and is likely to lose next time.

Sinn Féin's policy remains against participation in an assembly, and it may be a step too far to risk the wrath of the ard fheis further at this stage.

There are several motions tabled for annual conference calling for a special conference, and members unhappy with the Stormont deal suspect it would be asked to address participation.

They point to recent reorganisation of the local parties, which they claim gives the leaders a free hand while pay-

Sovereignty Committee could benefit. It is stepping up its recruitment drive in the run up to the simultaneous referendums in Northern Ireland and the Republic on May 22.

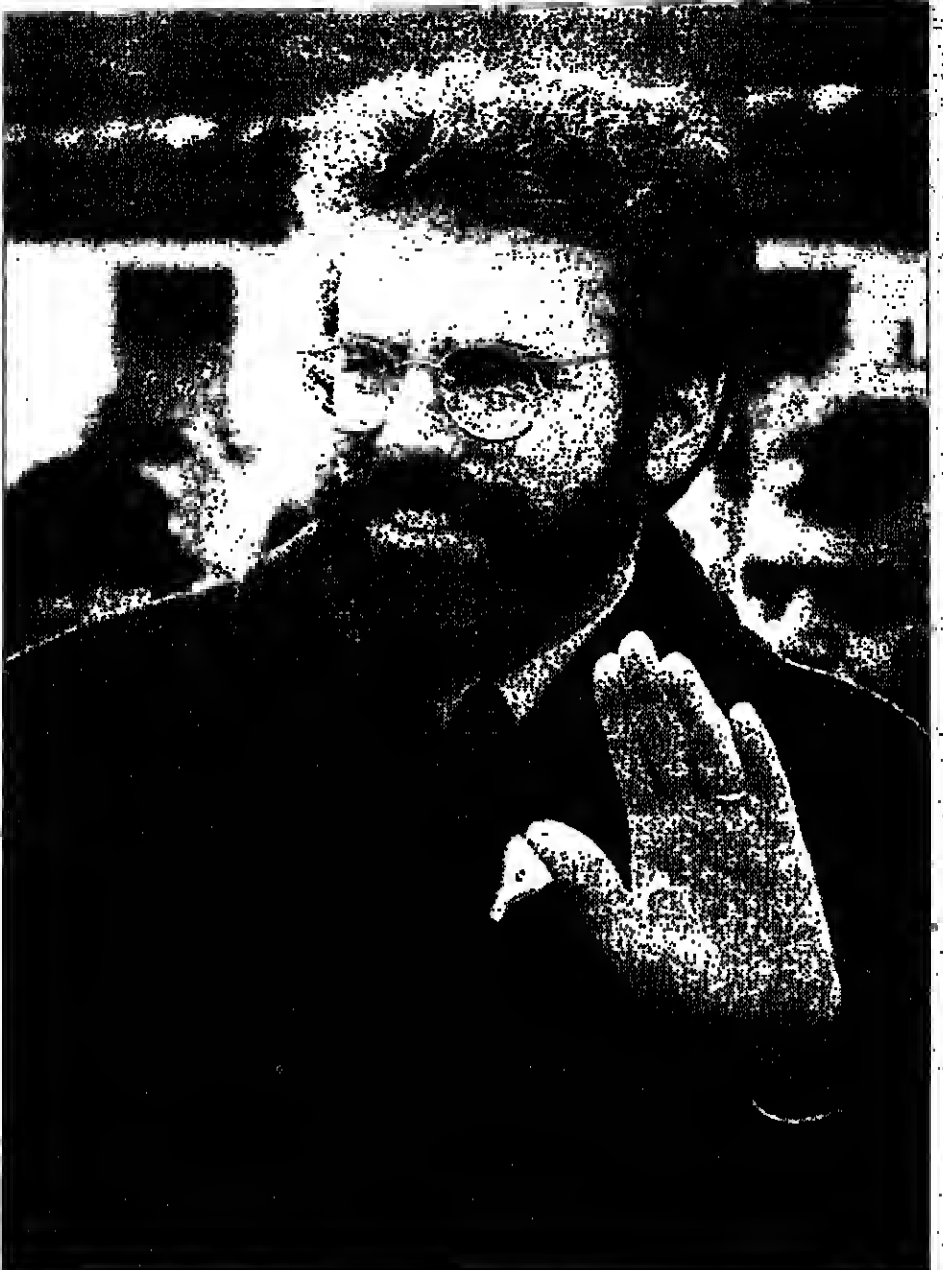
All these groups are understood to have their military wings. Each is opposed to the IRA ceasefire, recently extended for four months.

The IRSP is linked to the Irish National Liberation Army. It is responsible for three more murders since it shot dead Billy Wright, the loyalist leader, at the Maze in December, sparking a surge of sectarian killings.

The RSP is linked to Community IRA, active this year in



David Trimble outside Stormont during last week's negotiations PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL McELEAN



Gerry Adams at Carrickmore, County Tyrone yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL McELEAN

It is not just his own small band of MPs Mr Trimble has to contend with but the grassroots members, many of whom will find it impossible to make the change from the fixed tenets of old Unionism. The 800-strong Ulster Unionist council meets on Saturday to decide whether to endorse the executive's decision. The executive is made up primarily of the older members of the party, while the council has a bigger representation

day a small group of protesters, some claiming to be disillusioned Unionists and some DUP sympathisers, shouted "sell-out" as the MPs, councillors and other senior figures left the building, but cheered MPs such as Mr Donaldson, Mr Thompson and Mr Ross.

One of the protesters, Paul Ferguson, aged 25, from Belfast, studying law at King's College, London, insisted he was not a member of any party but felt so strongly

block away. One of the band members said he would vote No in the referendum. His arms tattooed with "True Blue" and "United We Stand", he said: "The loyalist people have two choices: surrender or fight back."

He predicted that the Loyalist Volunteer Force, the paramilitary group that has not accepted the ceasefire, "will find quite a lot of support in the Unionist community".

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tion for a decision to take up Westminster seats, with Sinn Féin likely to do extremely well next time around.

The SDLP, with three Westminster seats, is vulnerable to Sinn Féin in Foyle, John Hume's constituency, and in deputy leader Seamus Mallon's Newry and Armagh seat. Both men, in their 60s, are expected to stand down at the end of this parliament.

Sinn Féin would also hope to win West Tyrone. Willie

lip service to consultation.

Such a move would be dangerous for a movement which values unity above all else, and there will be more defections to the splinter groups.

Whether it is a trickle or a tidal wave is the question.

Few enough Sinn Féin members will rush off to embrace longstanding enemies like the RSP or the Irish Republican Socialist Party, but the fledgling 33-County

car bombings. Its devices devastated Portadown and Moira in a tinderbox mid-Ulster, while at least four more have been intercepted.

An unnamed group, which security forces are dubbing Dissident IRA, is said to be linked to the 32-County Sovereignty Committee. It worries police most because it is an unknown quantity, and is said to be led by a former quartermaster-general of the IRA.

A world away from Trouble at the golf club

Rory Carroll sees how the other half thinks, far from the violence

THE sun broke through at the wrong moment, blinding Graham Campbell just as he was ready to chip onto the green. "Damn," he muttered, lowering his pitching wedge and rubbing his eyes. Now he would have to prepare the shot all over again.

Others at the Royal Belfast Golf Club were having similar problems. Calm and sunny one moment, hus-

tery and showery the next, dousing their chimos and cashmere sweaters. Very unsettling.

But it was the weekend and banter on the greens remained good natured. Talk was of new Saabs, Sunday dinner and Darren Clarke taking on Tiger Woods at the US Masters.

Hardly the stuff of revolt. No shouts of sell-out, no placards accusing David Trimble of betraying the

Union, but then that's not their style. This is Northern Ireland's so-called Gold Coast, the leafy wonderland north of Belfast where rich Protestants (and some Catholics) reside, unassailed by decades of sectarian violence.

They have done well out of the Union, some even out of the Troubles. Civil servants, judges, doctors, barristers and business people earn London salaries where the cost of living is among the lowest in the UK.

The deal triggered an emotional rollercoaster of reaction, from euphoria to

trepidation and suspicion, but few predicted indifference, boredom even.

For decades the Gold Coast was saturated with news about a war that rarely touched them. Many inhabitants are bemused at television's breathless reporting of red-eyed politicians emerging from Stormont, clutching a piece of paper. The 30-page agreement, to be posted to every home in Northern Ireland, is likely to remain unread by many.

But how they react to the agreement is crucial. Despite deriding the Demo-

cratic Unionist Party leader Ian Paisley as a vulgar redneck, many could vote No in May's referendum, figuring a deal could grease the slope to a united Ireland and offer little in exchange: they have no sons in prison, no army house searches, no fear of gunmen spraying their pub.

"You'll make us out to be white South Africans, when the blacks get a look in," said one Cyprus-tanned golf club member, who asked not to be named.

"If the referendum was today it would get through 60-40, no problem. But in six weeks it could be different. People will have time to stop and wonder do they really want to go through with a heroic gesture?"

Five miles away at Bangor Golf Club, more Argyle than cashmere but definitely Gold Coast, bar conversation turns cynical.

"Once the politicians take their seats [in the new assembly] they'll rake it in. Another 24 grand, easy. Add it all up and Blair wouldn't be getting as much." No one challenges the claims or the tone.

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As republicans throughout Ireland attended rallies to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising, the IRA delivered a wait-and-see response to an agreement which falls short of Sinn Féin's minimum requirements.

It said: "We will judge it against its potential to deliver a just and durable peace to our country."

Mr Adams, praised in the IRA statement, paid tribute to the terror organisation. Addressing a rally at Carrickmore, Co Tyrone, which has seen some of the worst violence of the Troubles, he spoke warmly of the local bri-

Mitchell warns of terror threat to Ulster peace deal

gade's "courage, tenacity and commitment".

He indicated that he believed the armed phase of the republican struggle was over. "When I pay tribute to the IRA soldiers, I pay tribute not just to their role when they make war, but also to their role when they provide the opportunity for making peace."

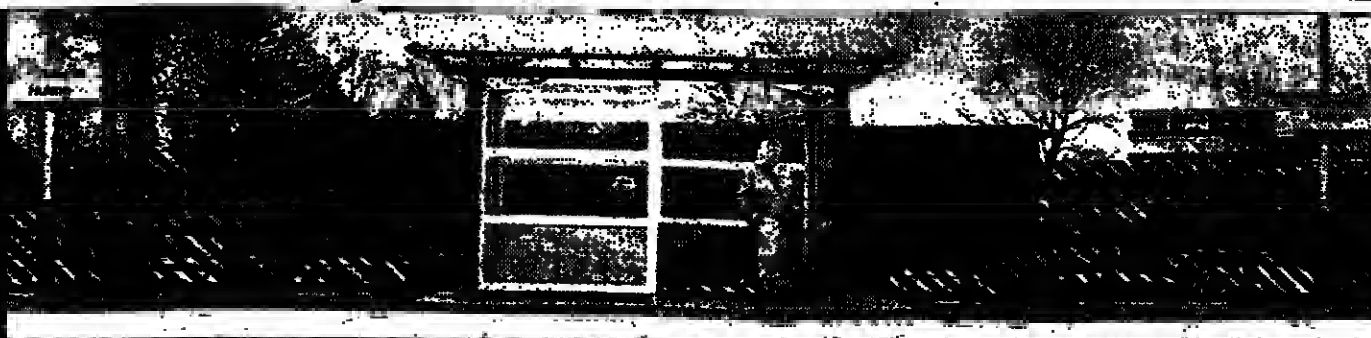
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Monsanto admits misjudging consumer concerns over genetically modified crops

Food firm's PR 'errors'

John Vidal

MONSANTO, the huge US chemical company which is facing mounting opposition in Europe as it spearheads the rush to hi-tech foods, has called for genetically modified (GM) crops to be separated at source from traditional foods and has admitted that it has misjudged consumers' concerns.

In an interview with the Guardian, two directors also challenged the British food industry to label all traditional food as "GM-free". The industry, which has strongly resisted this form of words, prefers to label selectively products derived wholly from GM crops.

As Monsanto prepared to mount a multi-million pound public relations campaign to

convince European shoppers of the ecological and global benefits of GM foods, it admitted having underestimated ethical and scientific concerns and pushed its products on to the market without explanation.

"We made mistakes which we regret. We should have listened more carefully," said Philip Angell, its US director of corporate communications. The scale and speed of the GM food revolution has astonished observers and worried critics, who see a further global intensification of farming and no choice for consumers. Monsanto yesterday confirmed that 50 million acres of its soya, maize and cotton are now planted in the US, compared with 2 million acres in 1995.

The company expects GM crops to double in acreage within two years as hi-tech varieties of cassava, potatoes

and oil seed rape become available, and to grow exponentially early next century as GM rice and wheat, two of the world's biggest crops, are developed.

Until now, it has claimed that segregation of GM foods is unnecessary, impractical or too costly, a line that European governments and the food industry have broadly followed as imports of the company's GM soya have flooded in and been mixed with traditional crops. Last month the British supermarket chain Iceland changed its own brands to exclude GM food, and the Government issued the names of some foreign companies providing the food industry with GM-free soya.

"GM food can be separated," said Mr Angell. "It may involve extra costs, but if people feel it is important that food is certified GM-free then

they should have a right to buy these foods. We don't mind foods being labelled GM-free."

But critics yesterday argued that consumers should not have to bear the extra costs of Monsanto's new food technology. Julie Shepherd of the Consumers' Association said: "Why should we pay more for foods that we have enjoyed for decades?" Monsanto's PR drive aims to "educate" European shoppers that GM foods are superior and less environmentally damaging. Focus groups and polls in Europe consistently show widespread ignorance and misunderstanding about GM crops, but when the technology is explained people are still resistant.

The company will spend more than £2 million in Britain and a similar amount in most other European countries on press advertise-

ments, websites, freephones, posters and brochures. It will open a London office.

It has rejected the use of television as being "too active" a medium. "We want to drain the emotion from the debate," said Mr Angell. Monsanto has offered free advertising space to selected British critics to put their view. "This is not a charm offensive or propaganda," he said. "We want to foster discussion."

But the Consumers' Association said it would probably reject the offer, preferring to join a Europe-wide consumer group campaign against the new foods. "Monsanto has not approached its most radical critics, like Friends of the Earth or Greenpeace," said Tim Lang, professor of food policy at Middlesex University, who has been approached. "They are seeking to divide the opposition."



Hard times... Princess Diana, aka Amy Clare Seccombe, as always dodges the rat-pack of hacks in Mirror TV's film shot in Majorca

Puff goes the plot in very nice Di film

NANCY BANKS SMITH views the first movie about Diana, Princess of Wales, premiered last night by Live TV

DIANA: A Tribute to the People's Princess, shown on television last night, is the first film of her life past the post. It had a headstart; made by Mirror TV and shown on its Live TV, it went into production a fortnight after her death.

The last year of her life was shown in the good, old-fashioned Hollywood way with newspaper headlines of an implausible nature. THE MIRROR: My Nephew and Princess are in Thruxton; Eastern Love Affair (exclusive); THE MIRROR: They are in Love, says Surgeon's Cousin (exclusive); THE MIRROR: Princess Di's Dresses Raise \$250,000 (exclusive); THE MIRROR: Di takes Dodi to visit Chelvey (exclusive). I have not seen such barefaced cheek since The Full Monty.

The writer and director, Gabrielle Beaumont, is adept at slipping in the odd pun. Some odder than others. At one point Diana, her sons and her butler, were enthusing at extror-

inary length about a film they had just seen. Harry: "That was the best Star Trek film yet!" William: "The Vulcan was brilliant!" Harry: "The special effects were just terrific!" Diana: "Captain Luc Piazzi is my hero!" Gabrielle Beaumont directed Star Trek: The Next Generation.

It gave some force to the Duchess of York's joke to Diana — "I'm sure we can find a spot for you in one of my commercials". Her chief life became a spot in an extended commercial.

Diana was played by the inexperienced Amy Clare Seccombe, supported by George Jackson as Dodi. Rory Jennings as Prince Harry actually seemed to be enjoying himself. If no one was really nice, Dodi was nice ("Harry and I really like Dodi. He's cool.") Mohamed Ali (played by a Polish economist) was nice. The press

were just awful. Diana taught Dodi the meaning of true love ("I don't want anything from you except love and love is something you can't buy, Dodi. Do you understand?") I think he got the hang of this but I'm not sure ("I'll whisk you off to my apartment and make passionate love to you.") Sad circumstance prevented us seeing any such thing.

The budget felt tight to the point of onch. The whole film was shot in Majorca ("Offered everything"). Not quite. There was a marked shortage of amputees for Diana to comfort in Majorca, so the suffering were apt to sit on one leg or stand sideways. The assistant location manager, the production manager and an electrician all doubled as reporters. Diana's wardrobe was sparse. And a door, disturbingly, seemed to follow her around.

Diana's Memorial Fund tried to stop the film — "entirely inappropriate". And they won't get a penny. So there. Now can we have Robert Maxwell: A Tribute to the Pensioner's Friend?



All going swimmingly... Amy Clare Seccombe in role

'Schizophrenic' student to sue authority

Clare Longrigg

AT THE age of 20, Christine Downes was enjoying art school. It was the end of the 1960s, she was relishing her freedom, sharing a garret with a friend. "It was extraordinary to go from being a schoolgirl, having led a very sheltered life, into this world of artists... I felt free at last," she said in her flat near Birmingham.

At art school, she had fallen in love with a Polish economics student and, after an inseparable summer, thought she would marry him. But in the next term, at a party, she clinked wine glasses with another girl; Christine saw she was being publicly flitted.

Shattered by the end of the relationship she got through the academic year, but back

at her parents' home things went awry. Now 59, she looks back on that time with horror. "I couldn't get emotional support from my mother. My life was disintegrating. I started talking gibberish. My mother called the GP, who arrived with a psychiatrist. They didn't talk to me at all, only with my mother. Then, an ambulance drove up, and the proverbial men in white coats came to get me."

"I was thinking, my mother couldn't do this to me. They said it was a voluntary admission, but it wasn't. Highcroft hospital was a traditional Victorian asylum, huge and bleak, surrounded by high railings. Christine was put in a shabby ward, with six women. She was not allowed to smoke, or have a bath unless watched by a nurse. Unknown to her, Christine

had been diagnosed schizophrenic, apparently on the strength of information from her mother. She was forced to undergo electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) every other day. She found these sessions so scary and debilitating the nurses had to drag her into the theatre. "I had to lie on the bed, flat. They put a red rubber gag in my mouth, like a bit. The doctors gave me pethidine."

Now Ms Downes has discovered that the treatment was inappropriate and unnecessary. She is not schizophrenic. Nearly 40 years on, doctors have confirmed she suffers only mood swings. The shock of being clinked by the Polish boyfriend probably left her with a nervous breakdown, but, with care, she would have recovered. Instead, she has spent a lifetime

on tranquillisers, hidden by parents traumatised by the stigma of a mentally ill daughter. Her father did make her leave the hospital when he saw she was down to five stone and refusing food. A few weeks after that, she got work as a bank clerk. And that was that, until she had to take a retirement aged 50.

She says her mother was always at her side, making sure she had no friendships or relationships with men. Her medication made her feel tired; she lost her balance. In 1989, she was given a reduced pension and invalidity benefit. It was then that her mother told her she had been diagnosed schizophrenic. "I was shattered. I felt guilt, embarrassment. It was so awful... this stigma."

After her parents died in 1995, Ms Downes moved into a

flat with her dachshund, Schnapps, and registered with a new GP. To check her invalidity benefit claim, he sent her to a psychiatrist. She found she was suffering just mood swings. Another doctor said that at the time she went to psychiatric hospital, cases like hers were fairly common. "Often young ladies who didn't conform to parents' wishes were institutionalised."

Ms Downes is seeking legal aid to sue the health authority which institutionalised her. In a similar case last year, a man who had been prescribed tranquillisers for years after a misdiagnosis, was granted leave to sue a health authority.

After the realisation at the new diagnosis, Ms Downes felt the weight of wasted years. After 30 years on prescription drugs she feels robbed of her life.



Tatchell leads protesters in shouting down George Carey

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIAN ARNES

Gay activists storm Carey's sermon

Campaigners deny scoring PR own goal with cathedral stunt

Stuart Miller

GAY rights campaigners yesterday denied they had scored a public relations own goal by invading the pulpit during the Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter sermon.

Peter Tatchell, organiser of the militant group OutRage!, was arrested after he and six others climbed into the pulpit at Canterbury Cathedral to protest at the Church of England's opposition to gay clergy.

They held up banners while Mr Tatchell criticised Archbishop George Carey from the pulpit. Mr Tatchell, aged 46, was then led away, his arms held behind his back, by stewards and a police officer in the congregation. He said later he had been hailed to appear before Canterbury and St Augustine's magistrates on May 15 charged with "riotous or violent" behaviour in a church under the 1860 Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act.

Dr Carey has angered gay activists by opposing proposals to reduce the age of consent for homosexual sex to 16 — the legal minimum for heterosexuals — from 18. He also opposes equal rights for gays to adopt children.

David Easman, a spokesman for the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, said Mr Tatchell had climbed into the pulpit just as the archbishop got

there and started shouting. "Dr Carey handled it extremely well and calmly."

Before continuing with his sermon, Dr Carey told the congregation of 2,000: "This has happened before and it will doubtless happen again. Let's go back to the service."

He said afterwards: "I was saddened by this disruption. I do not think it does their cause any good. The Church welcomes discussion on this matter and is already involved with serious-minded people in this debate."

Some members of the congregation had shouted "Out! Out!" at the protesters, according to witnesses. Other witnesses claimed that the congregation had been disgusted by the "counter-productive" protest. "I have sympathy with what they are saying," said one. "But tactics like this merely set the cause back."

OutRage! insisted its tactics had been successful. David Allison, its spokesman, said: "The people who attend these sorts of events would take a negative attitude because the very fact they are there implies they support the attitudes of the Church. We were not preaching to that audience; our protest was aimed at the wider audience outside the church."

The protest comes a week after gay rights groups promised "an unprecedented level

of activity" in a campaign to force the Government to make good its pre-election promises on gay issues.

"This was an exclusively OutRage! protest," said Mr Allison. "But I think people will certainly see a brightening of in-your-face action over the next few months."

At its Lambeth Conference in July, the Church faces a key decision on the ordination of avowed homosexuals as priests. Several US bishops are pressing for a change to allow this, but many of their colleagues in Asia and Africa find the idea morally repugnant.

Traditionalist may retire early

GEORGE Austin, the Archdeacon of York, is considering early retirement because of ill health and frustration at what he sees as the siege of traditional beliefs in the Church of England, writes Martin Wainwright.

Booked into hospital next month for treatment for sleeplessness, the Ven Austin, aged 67, said yesterday he was "clinging on by his fingertips" to his policy of defending the High Church corner from within the priesthood.

In an article in the Sunday Times, he accused church liberals of reneging on compromise and "driving out" traditionalist priests one by one.

In his "God Save" on BBC Radio York yesterday he hinted at a "resurrection" if treatment proves successful.

Blair reshuffle likely

Mandelson 'tipped' for policy enforcer role in cabinet shake-up

Lucy Ward
Political Correspondent

SPECULATION about a cabinet reshuffle surfaced yesterday amid renewed suggestions that Tony Blair may announce changes shortly after Easter.

It had been expected that he would hold off until June or July after Britain ended its European presidency.

Peter Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio, is thought to have given up his quest for a "proper job" in Mr Blair's Cabinet amid views that reorganisation would see him become an enforcer of government strategy. Mr Mandelson was understood earlier this year to want the job of Chief Secretary, but a role co-ordinating and driving policy seems more likely.

Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, appears to have lost her right to keep her job, despite allies' insistence she had performed effectively during and since

last month's publication of the welfare green paper.

One minister last night said there was "feverish" speculation about an early cabinet reshuffle. Mr Mandelson's expected move, possibly replacing David Clark, leading an expanded Cabinet Office, would "recognise" his present role, the minister said.

Mr Blair, taking a break in Spain with his family before travelling to the Middle East on Friday, is understood to be examining a document from Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary, dealing with the relationship between Downing Street and Whitehall.

Some believe Mr Mandelson may even be the source of reshuffle speculation, since he is eager to move swiftly to a cabinet job. "There may be some people playing games and encouraging all this," one minister warned. "The reasons for a reshuffle are twofold — are individuals underperforming, or is the Government as a whole underperforming? I don't think anyone

believes the Government is underperforming, and the cabinet names who are expected to be moved have barely changed in months."

Those expected to be fired by Mr Blair are Mr Harman, Dr Clark, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the Transport Minister Gavin Strang. Alistair Darling, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, is tipped to take over as Social Security Secretary.

Some reports suggest Nick Brown, the Chief Whip, faces the axe in favour of Peter Kilfoyle, a junior minister in the Cabinet Office. One source admitted it seemed Mr Blair felt Mr Brown was "not in control of things at the moment", but believed a replacement would come via the whips' office.

Others think removing Mr Brown, a close friend of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, would be seen as reviving tensions between Nos 10 and 11 following the biography of the Chancellor that said he was disappointed at losing the Labour leadership to Tony Blair.

Meanwhile, the Conservative leader, William Hague, could move swiftly after the local government elections to shake out his top team.

Blunkett to exhort teachers to join higher standards fight

John Carroll
Education Editor

DAVID Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, will today enter the lion's den of the National Union of Teachers' conference in Blackpool to warn leftwing delegates against taking any industrial action which might interfere with the campaign to raise educational standards.

When he attended three years ago as the Opposition's education spokesman, he was jostled by demonstrators and forced to seek refuge with his guide dog until order could be restored.

This time he will try to woo representatives of the largest teaching union with a promise to make their life easier by introducing £100 million worth of the latest in-

formation technology. He will release £100 million of Government money for wiring up schools to the National Grid for Learning, which links with a virtual teacher centre.

Mr Blunkett is also expected to meet teachers' demands for a cut in the bureaucratic tasks which take time away from providing direct help to the pupils.

But his main message is expected to be delivered over the heads of the delegates to appeal to all teachers for a new partnership in raising standards.

He will tell them to stop thinking of themselves as victims and join the Government in a fight for school improvement.

No industrial action that might damage the standards agenda will be acceptable, he will say. The conference yesterday rejected demands from leftwing delegates for direct action against the Government, but it demanded a delay in Mr Blunkett's plans for improving literacy until teachers were better trained.

The Government wants all primary schools to introduce a "literacy hour", using techniques of instruction laid down by Whitehall.

"The literacy framework is likely to create unacceptable levels of additional workload for many teachers and the expectation on schools to introduce the literacy hour from September, before most teachers have received adequate training, is totally unacceptable," the union agreed.

One teacher said the literacy guidelines insulted teachers' intelligence and would lower standards. But other delegates said the literacy strategy was helpful.

I feel stupid, and reckless, and weak for having allowed my sexuality to be exposed this way. I don't feel any shame whatsoever and neither do I think I should

George Michael

Stupid pop star has few regrets

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Arrested singer breaks silence

'I feel stupid, and reckless, and weak for having allowed my sexuality to be exposed this way, but I don't feel any shame whatsoever and neither do I think I should'

George Michael



North raises head of steam on 'stolen cultural treasure'

Martha Wainwright

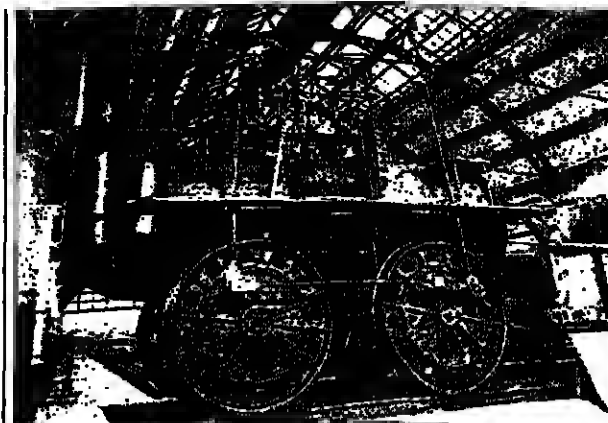
AN outbreak of cultural interest in returning "stolen" treasures to local museums has hit the English regions.

The latest target of "Elgin Marbles syndrome" is George Stephenson's celebrated Rocket, built in Newcastle upon Tyne for service between Manchester and Liverpool. It was taken to London in 1862 and is now in the Science Museum in Kensington, with only a replica at York within relatively easy reach of Geordies.

"We have a unique cultural heritage here in the North-east," said Don Price of Newcastle city council, which is to lobby the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, to get the side-piston four-wheeled locomotive back home.

"It seems ludicrous that such significant artefacts have been squirreled away to London. There are many people in the region who will never see the Rocket, and that's not right."

The Rocket effectively launched the era of steam travel, when its revolutionary tubular boiler out-distanced all rivals at the Rainhill trials, near Liverpool, in 1825, winning £500 for maintaining 12mph.



Give us back our 'Elgin Marbles'

North-east
The Rocket from Science Museum; Lindisfarne Gospels from British Library

East Anglia
Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon ship/burial treasure from British Museum; Constable paintings of his native Suffolk/Essex border from Victoria & Albert

West Country
Memorabilia of Thomas Hardy's Dorset life from British Library; Turner's Crossing the Brook, painted by the Tamar, from Tate

Midlands
Original sets of gummed paper

designed by Rowland Hill, Shrewsbury-born inventor of the postage stamp, from British Museum; pottery masterpieces by Wedgwood of Stoke-on-Trent from V&A

North-west
Liverpool shipping memorabilia from National Maritime Museum; Lakeland climbing archives and equipment from Alpina Club

Yorkshire
Wakefield man John Harrison's chronometers 1-4 from Royal Observatory, Greenwich; Vasequize Rokeby Venus back to Rokeby Hall from National Gallery

stayed in front of the grand procession of steam engines and was killed. The campaign joins efforts by regional MPs and the Bishop of Durham to return the 7th century Lindisfarne Gospels to the North-east, where they were kept until Henry VIII

purchased them in 1537. Early computers pioneered in Manchester, Essex grave-goods from East Angles and even Greenwich's four chronometers invented by Yorkshireman John Harrison could be added to the "please return" list.

"National treasures belong to the country, not just to London," said Fraser Kemp, Labour MP for Houghton and Washington East, who last week introduced a 10-minute bill demanding the gospels' return after a similar initiative failed in the Lords.

The moves have also been backed by museum administrators in the regions, who argue that London's bid superiority in conservation and security has been eroded by the relocation of national museums outside the capital. York's railway museum, the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford and the Royal Armouries in Leeds are among acknowledged leaders in their fields.

But that could cut both ways, according to London museum directors, who will make preserving the capital's treasure trove a priority for the new mayor, if the referendum next month supports constitutional change.

Artefacts lost by the capital, particularly weaponry transferred from the Tower of London to Leeds when the Armouries opened two years ago, could make a general exchange less attractive for the regions.

"I don't see how we could give the Rocket proposal serious consideration anyway," said Sir Neil Cossons, director of the Science Museum, whose scepticism is shared by the British Library. Staff there successfully lobbied peers to support their claim that the best expertise and security for the Lindisfarne Gospels remain in London.

'Stupid' pop star has few regrets

Stuart Miller

GEORGE Michael has broken his silence over his arrest for lewd conduct in a Los Angeles park with television interview in which he admitted he was gay.

The singer, who was arrested on Wednesday by undercover officers in the men's lavatory of the Will Rogers Memorial Park in Beverly Hills, apologised to his fans, but admitted he got a "kick" from the threat of being found out and felt no shame for the incident.

His only regret, he told CNN, was the way the truth about his homosexuality finally emerged. "I want to say that I have no problem with people knowing I am in a relationship with a man right now," he said. "I have not been in a relationship with a woman for almost 10 years."

The 34-year-old former Wham! star added: "I want people to know that I have not been exposed as a gay man in any way that I feel any shame for. I feel stupid, and reckless, and weak for having allowed my sexuality to be exposed this way, but I don't feel any shame whatsoever and neither do I think I should."

Michael admitted it was the first time he had had sexual encounters in the park. "I have put myself in that position before. I can only apologise. I can try to fathom out why I did it, to understand my own sexuality a bit better but ultimately part of me has to believe that some of the kick was the fact I might get found."

Despite the interview, the story showed no sign of abating yesterday as the News of the World carried more claims about Michael's sexual activities. It published what it claimed were pictures of the singer in the same park hunting for gay men.

The pictures were taken several months ago by a freelance photographer looking for celebrities walking or jogging. According to the paper, the singer spent three hours making 15 trips between two lavatories — "giving the lie to George's claim that he was entrapped by police in a moment of recklessness".

Michael's sexuality has long been the subject of speculation. During the 20 minute interview on Friday, Michael insisted that Wham! his such as I'm Your Man and Last Christmas were written during his "straight" period, but later solo records such as I Want Your Sex contained clues that he was gay. "I spent the first half of my career being accused of being gay when I hadn't had anything like a gay relationship. In fact, I was 27 before that happened to me."

US prosecutors are to decide by next week whether charges will be filed.

Mayall's wife optimistic as comic reported stable

Clare Longridge

THE wife of comedian Rik Mayall yesterday said she was more optimistic as her husband continued to recover from serious head injuries after being crushed by a quad bike. "We think he is OK," said Barbara Mayall, who has been at her husband's side since the accident at their Devon home on Thursday.

Mayall, aged 39, has been in intensive care, heavily sedated, on the neurological ward of Derriford hospital, Plymouth, since the accident. Yesterday, the hospital confirmed he was "stable". Two of Mayall's Comic Strip comedy partners, Peter Richardson and Adrian Edmondson, have visited him, and fans and friends have been ringing in and sending flowers. A film co-starring Mayall, Four Men in a Car, was screened last night after his family gave the go-ahead.

The accident happened when Mayall was driving the four-wheel motor bike, watched by his three children. It toppled over him on a steep slope and he was found unconscious. The rescue services flew him to Plymouth. Mayall bought the country estate last year as a retreat for his family. Famous for his comic role in the BBC series, The Young Ones, he was also in The Comic Strip Presents, and The New Statesman.

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Then and now... Egypt's President Anwar Sadat (above, left) addresses the Knesset on his historic peacemaking trip to Israel in 1977. Twenty-one years on, an activist from Israel's Peace Now movement is arrested yesterday (right) after being prevented from entering Hebron to demonstrate against government-funded Passover celebrations in a city where 500 Jewish settlers live among 120,000 Palestinians



PHOTOGRAPH (RIGHT): NATH HARNIK

Hamas murder suspect seized

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

PALESTINIAN police arrested a leading Islamist militant suspected of killing the Hamas master bomber Mubir al-Din Sharif in a car explosion in Gaza on Friday. The militant was shot dead before the car exploded, a Palestinian official said.

Mr Adassi is one of several members of Hamas's armed wing arrested in a Palestinian crackdown since Sharif's death. "The security apparatus has questioned [Awadallah] and now we have further direct confirmation that Sharif was shot dead before the car exploded," Mr Abdel-Rahim said.

ploded car in Ramallah two weeks ago.

Mr Awadallah is suspected of shooting Sharif before another Hamas member, Ghassan al-Adassi, allegedly booby-trapped the car to explode three hours later, a Palestinian official said.

Mr Adassi is one of several members of Hamas's armed wing arrested in a Palestinian crackdown since Sharif's death.

"The security apparatus has questioned [Awadallah] and now we have further direct confirmation that Sharif was shot dead before the car exploded," Mr Abdel-Rahim said.

Hundreds of Hamas activists demonstrated in the West Bank city of Nablus at the weekend, calling for attacks against Israel. At the al-Najah university masked Hamas members were cheered as they burned Israeli flags and a mock Israeli bus.

Elsewhere in the West Bank thousands of Israelis in T-shirts and baseball caps

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Too much history and not enough geography



Israel at 50

After half a century of conflict, peace remains elusive, despite bold initiatives by Anwar Sadat and others. **Ian Black**, continuing the Guardian series, examines Israel's stormy relations with its Arab neighbours

IT WAS an electric, unforgettable moment when Anwar Sadat stepped, grave but smiling, at the door of the plane that had just flown him from Cairo to Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion airport.

Crowds gawped and cameras whirled and history was in the air. A sense that November 19 1977 would always be remembered as the day the great taboo was broken, when an Arab leader dared for the first time to treat publicly with the Jewish state.

Euphoria reigned as the Egyptian president vowed "no more war" from the podium of Israel's parliament, the Knesset, and Menachem Begin, Israel's prime minister, paid fulsome tribute to the man who had shaken the Middle East by lending his arm across the Suez Canal in the war of October 1973.

"Unbelievable," people muttered, as Hebrew newspapers appeared with Arabic headlines welcoming Sadat, who is still remembered, in the words of a popular Israeli song, "with pyramids in his eyes and peace in his pipe".

Autonomy for the Palestinians got nowhere slowly, but Sadat sent an ambassador to Tel Aviv and got back the Sinai desert. Four years later he was gunned down by fundamentalists who denounced him as a traitor.

As Israelis and Arabs look back on a half century of confrontation that has cost thousands of lives and millions of pounds, Sadat's dramatic journey to Jerusalem remains the exception to the rule in the long search for a just and lasting peace.

No other initiative has managed to break down the wall of suspicion between the two sides because, despite Yitzhak Rabin's Oslo agreement with Yasser Arafat and the thrilling moment of their handshake on the White House lawn, the core issue — a final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians — remains to be resolved.

Oslo, always flawed and now in deep trouble, matters little because it is the only agreement Israel has reached with the Palestinians, the people it dispossessed in the heat of battle in 1948.

From their war of independence until the deal was struck in a Norwegian country house in August 1993, the Israelis secretly tried to make peace with Arab states while circumventing the Palestinian issue. At the same time Israel worked to weaken its enemies by dealing with their enemies — Lebanese Christians, Syrian Druze,

rael is still regarded with disdain, envy and hatred. To many ordinary Arabs it remains a foreign implant, a child of British imperialism sustained today by the US. Biblical links and the tragedy of the Jews of Europe have never been understood. Anything that involves Israel is accompanied by elaborate and often ridiculous conspiracy theories. Zionism remains a dirty word.

BUSINESS and communications links between Israel and its neighbours have brought some progress. But there has been no change on the part of its most implacable Arab enemy, Syria, which insists mainly on full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and maintains a permanent hostility.

Syria is no longer the threat it was, but the confrontation with Israel still involves the trappings of war: espionage, terrorism, propaganda and a fight that could end in devastating exchanges of chemical and nuclear warheads.

A grudging accommodation may be possible, but normal relations are beyond reach. Syria's President Hafez al-Assad missed a "historic opportunity" to strike a deal with Rabin before his murder, the former US secretary of state Warren Christopher says in next Sunday's final episode of the fascinating BBC2 documentary series *The Fifty Years War*.

Peace remains elusive, but Israel may not care: 60 per cent of the Jewish population is native-born and Western-oriented and looks more to America and Europe than to Arabia. Israel's economy is stronger than that of any of its neighbours. Its military still has easily the upper hand.

Yet half a century of experience should provide the backdrop for change. Israelis today have a clearer understanding of their past than ever before. Zionism's famous "unseen question" of Arabs living in the promised land has a workable answer. Sadat proved in 1977 that big breakthroughs could occur. The brief post-Oslo honeymoon showed that barriers could come down.

Now Israel's young historians no longer describe a struggle against overwhelming odds and unchanging Arab hostility but offer a more nuanced account of complex events in a land where there is too much history — and in a region where real peace must mean more than the absence of war.



Street children riot over death

Lucy Hamman in Nairobi

BATTLE between street children and private security guards in Nairobi left two people dead and 30 needing hospital treatment at the weekend.

The police said that one child and one guard died. Nine other people, including young boys, were admitted to the government-run Kenyatta Hospital with broken limbs, head injuries and deep cuts.

Friday night's fight was triggered by the death of a street child in a hit-and-run accident — involving, say some witnesses, one of the security companies. Gangs of children threw stones at motorists and the city centre until they were confronted by guards privately employed to protect premises.

The guard who died was covered by a gang of about 100 who stoned him to death — a scene of "mob justice" now familiar in the streets and slums of the city. The guards avenged the death by attacking street children sleeping on the pavements and in rubbish dumps.

Hospital sources said the majority of casualties were children but that guards, transported in company vehicles, were the first to arrive.

The injured children made their way to hospital on foot, were brought by police or taken by friends, either carried or pushed in handcarts.

A nurse said the scene was "chaotic". Many of the children sniffed glue and drank home-made spirits as they lay in casualty. The number of such children in Nairobi has risen to about 60,000. They include young armed adults who lead underworld gangs.

Yesterday the police began taking some of the treated children to the central police station to be interviewed.

The city's demoralised and poorly paid police force is finding it increasingly difficult to contain riots and fights, and relies on the many private security companies.

News in brief

Tehran urges 'tranquillity'

The Iranian government has urged students to call off a demonstration tomorrow in support of Tehran's mayor, to "safeguard social tranquillity". Iranian television reported.

The mayor, Gholamhossein Karbaschi, a figure-head for the country's reformers, was detained a week ago in the capital on corruption charges. His trial is expected later this month. — AP.

Rwanda attack

Twenty-four people died in an attack on a village in the Gitarama district of central Rwanda at the weekend, the independent Rwanda News Agency reported. The attack brings to 125 the number of people who have died in a spate of attacks since Tuesday. — Reuters.

Volcano trip

Italian firefighters rescued a Belgian tourist yesterday after he fell 650m into the active crater of Mount Vesuvius, the news agency Ansa reported. He was treated for head wounds and a suspected broken foot. — AP.

Jaffa blast

A grenade was thrown into a crowded market in the north-

ern Sri Lankan city of Jaffna yesterday, killing at least one person and wounding 19, the army said. Government troops captured Jaffna from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 1995. — Reuters.

French rail truce

French cauliflower farmers who blocked railway lines in Brittany for two days in protest at falling produce prices announced an Easter truce yesterday, temporarily calling off their protests. But they threatened renewed action this week if their demands for additional state subsidies were not met. — Reuters.

Malaysian fires

Malaysia, hit hard by a water shortage in the capital Kuala Lumpur, is now struggling to deal with fires breaking out in many parts of the country because of drought, officials said yesterday. Fire reports said yesterday. All 8,000 of the country's firefighters have had their holidays cancelled until weather conditions improve. — Reuters.

Mum to rescue

A prisoner was on the run from a high-security jail near Miami yesterday after his 58-year-old mother and several of his friends drove a stolen truck through the prison's fence and opened fire on guards. — Reuters.

Pilfering pigeons ruffle gem mine

Alex Duval Smith in Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICAN pigeon fanciers are in a flap over a mining company's threat to shoot their birds on sight after one was apprehended at take-off with three diamonds strapped to its feet.

Alexkor, the state-owned mining company in Alexander Bay, near the border with Namibia, claims it is losing up to 20 per cent of its production to racing pigeons who enter the mine in workers' lunchboxes and leave by air.

But Koos Coetzee, chairman of the Alexander Bay Pigeon Club, says the birds are trained to return to their coops with the booty — should not pay the price for human greed.

"The problem is not with the pigeons. If the mine did its work and stopped people smuggling pigeons into the mine then there would not be a problem," he said.

Last year the club co-operated with an undercover police investigation that dismantled a ring whose three pigeons were believed to have

smuggled 25 carats of diamonds, worth \$11,000, out of the mine.

Thian Combrinck, the chief executive of Alexkor, admitted that shooting the pigeons was a last resort. "It is part of a wider strategy to tighten security. As a start, we have taken a decision to recommend to the board that it should outlaw pigeons in Alexander Bay," he said.

Executives of the company, which owns the town, made the recommendation after an embarrassing incident last month. As members of the parliament's public enter-

prises committee toured Alexkor, security officers nabbed a pigeon carrying three uncut diamonds. This prompted the committee chairman, Mandla Msomi, to propose a law allowing mining companies to shoot pigeons on sight.

The police say pigeons have been used for many years to smuggle gold and diamonds to Namibia. But they believe that in the past four years, in which more than \$500m of the mining industry have been paid off, more workers have fancied supplementing their incomes by keeping feathered friends.

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مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Two Koreas take tentative steps towards reconciliation at their first high-level talks in four years

Move to reunite millions

Andrew Browne in Beijing

NORTH KOREAN negotiators holding talks with the rival South agreed yesterday to discuss allowing the millions of families separated since the 1950-53 Korean war to hold reunions.

Progress in the first high-level contact between the two Koreas in four years followed a blunt message by the South that large-scale aid to its famine-stricken neighbour depended on concessions.

The talks, which began on Saturday in Beijing, moved to a working level to discuss family reunions, along with Southern proposals to exchange envoys and reopen liaison offices in the border truce village of Panmunjom.

Also on the agenda was the

implementation of the 1991 Basic Agreement to pursue peaceful reunification.

The Korean peninsula is split by razor wire and minefields under the terms of the 1953 armistice, which left North and South technically at war. Time is running out for many ageing Koreans with relatives across the border.

North Korean delegates emerging after almost two hours of working talks said the negotiations would resume on Monday. "There is still quite a distance between the two sides," the chief delegate, Jon Kum-chol, said.

South Korea's chief negotiator, the vice-minister for national unification Jeong Se-hyun, said earlier that he was "neither optimistic nor pessimistic" about the outcome.

He welcomed the working-level talks as "a sign of North



The North's Jon Kum-chol: 'There is still quite a distance between the two sides'

Korean willingness to resolve many issues".

Meanwhile the head of the World Food Programme said that six in 10 North Korean children were now born underweight, and three of those six died.

"All one has to do is to see skeletal children in the hospitals to know that this not only is the state of some of the chil-

dren, but that they reflect the state of their families and their mothers and fathers," Catherine Bertini told a news conference in Beijing after a visit to North Korea.

Yet, Ms Bertini said, the World Food Programme and Pyongyang were wrangling over monitoring aid. She said her organisation had threatened to cut back relief deliv-

eries after the authorities barred its inspectors from 50 of the country's 210 counties, where it said there were sensitive military installations.

Pyongyang had now agreed to let monitors into the areas within 30 days, she said.

Earlier, the humanitarian group Médecins sans Frontières issued a report saying that army and government officials were stealing relief supplies, and only a bare minimum was getting through to the sick and dying.

The report, based on interviews with North Korean refugees and Chinese travellers, spoke of cannibalism among North Korea's desperate population of 23 million.

Pyongyang sought the current Beijing talks to ask for as much as 200,000 tonnes of fertiliser. Three years of floods and drought have exacerbated the damage caused by

disastrous policies of collectivised farming. The soil is exhausted, and Seoul is the North's best hope for technical aid to wean the country off overseas food handouts.

The talks are the first high-level contact between North and South Korea since the death of Pyongyang's "Great Leader", Kim Il-sung, in 1994.

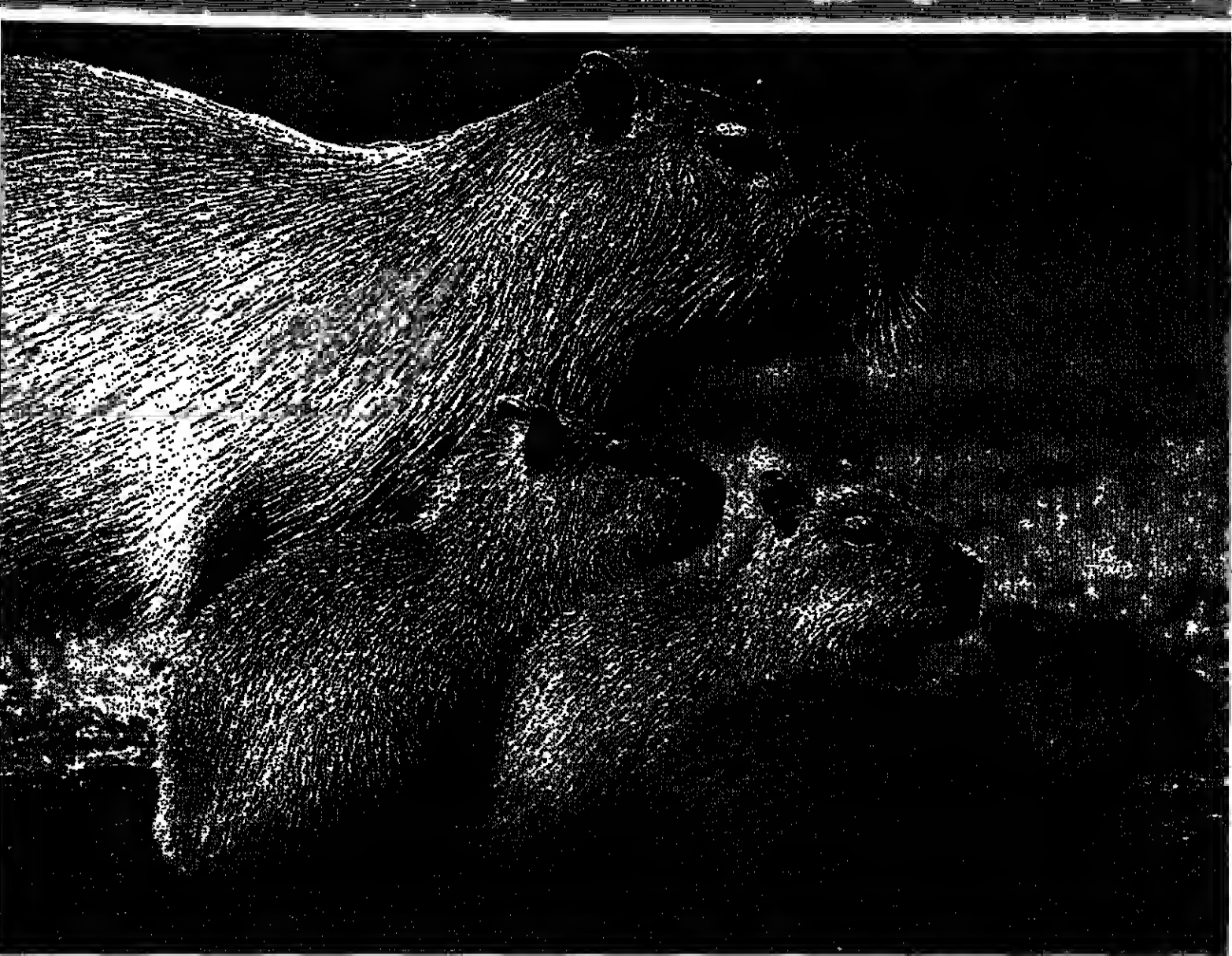
On Saturday the South said it was willing to donate fertiliser, seeds, pesticides, equipment and food. It also offered investments and promised to go ahead with the supply of light-water nuclear reactors pledged under a 1994 deal designed to remove the threat of the North developing nuclear weapons.

But Southern negotiators made it clear that Seoul demanded concessions, particularly since its own economy is suffering in the Asian financial crisis. — Reuters.

Fishy tales and strange Lenten repasts

Latin America's Eastertime traditions sanction the hunting and eating of reptiles and rodents — even though they are endangered species.

Jane Knight in Caracas and Jeremy Lennard in Bogotá report



Hmmm, dinner: A capybara with her young — the world's largest rodent is considered an Eastertime delicacy in Venezuela

EASTER week is not a good time to be the world's largest rodent. For the capybara — a snub-nosed animal that weighs an average 77-88lb and looks like a giant guinea pig — the annual festivities signify the cooking-pot.

Venezuela's predominantly Catholic population, which gives up meat for fish during Holy Week, justifies eating capybara because of the slightly fishy flavour of the salted meat. And the capybara is just one of a number of species — including alligator, turtle and iguana, and their eggs — that suffer from Latin America's dietary piety at this time of the year.

Demand for the rodent is so high that the environment ministry allows controlled hunting before Easter. This year about 7,000 will be legally killed. Another 10,000 will be imported from neighbouring Colombia.

"There is a rush of demand that will see about 170,000 kilograms (167 tons) of the meat eaten this week," said a ministry spokeswoman.

"The Church accepts the consumption of capybara meat as a valid alternative at Easter."

It was not known how many capybara there were — they live in herds, never straying far from water —

but licences were only given in areas where the population had increased.

Even the ministry admits that poaching is a problem and the Andabon Society environmental group said the capybara population was diminishing at an alarming rate.

Capybara is expensive — at \$11.50 a kilogram (£3.11 a pound) more than double the price of some fish — but for some, the chance to eat meat during Easter makes that a small price to pay.

In a handful of Caracas eateries, requests for capybara invite suspicious looks and whispered consultations. In the El Rey Chico bar down a side

street from one of the main boulevards, a waiter finally admitting selling the dish.

"Sometimes we sell it legally, but mostly it's illegally because of difficulties getting it," he confided with a wink. "We get it year round."

IN NEIGHBOURING Colombia, the ministry of environment estimates that more than 150,000 alligators, turtles and iguanas — many of them endangered species — have died this year, despite a campaign of publicity and policing.

Habitats are also destroyed as hunters slash or

burn tropical swamplands to drive out their prey.

Reptile eggs are best eaten before they are laid. In many cases animals are cut open to remove them from the womb. The eggs are then cooked in salt water and left to dry before being sold for between 20p and 21 each.

Officials have seized more than 15,000 eggs at street markets in major towns and cities.

"We are trying all we can to draw the public's attention to this," said the environment minister, Eduardo Verano de la Rosa.

"They have to understand they are decimating our wildlife."

In addition to their dietary preferences, Easter week pilgrims are also responsible for felling the rare wax palm — the tallest palm in the world and Colombia's national tree — for Palm Sunday celebrations.

Police fired rubber bullets at a group in southern Brazil engaged in the local Easter practice of ox-baiting, a traditional spectacle now classed as a crime except in special areas.

An ox is released into the streets, then chased and provoked until it collapses from exhaustion. The animal is then ritually slaughtered. Eleven people were arrested and released after paying a fine. — Reuters.

Zapatista town council broken up by soldiers

Phil Gannon in Mexico City

MEXICAN authorities in the southern state of Chiapas have dismantled the latest Zapatista "autonomous municipality" in a pre-dawn raid involving hundreds of police and soldiers. Nine Mexicans — including community leaders and a university professor — and 12 foreign observers were arrested during the operation on Saturday.

The "Ricardo Flores Magon" municipality, named after a prominent opponent of the turn-of-the-century dictator Porfirio Díaz, was established only the day earlier in Taniperla, which officially belongs to the municipality of Ocosingo.

It was the 32nd autonomous local authority set up by civilian supporters of the EZLN guerrillas since late 1994. The government regards as illegal and provocative, and the governor of Chiapas, Roberto Alfaro Gullán, did not rule out similar moves against other communities.

Claiming that he did not wish to create a climate of confrontation, the governor none the less declared that he would "definitely not allow

any group to violate the legal framework of Chiapas".

Non-governmental organisations in the state said the raid had been carried out without warrants and that the outside observers had been threatened with death.

"A building in the centre of the community was burned and destroyed by PRI [ruling party] supporters from the community with the backing

The diocese of San Cristóbal expressed concern, "above all at the disproportionate scale of the operation".

Its spokesman, Father Gonzalo Márquez, pointed out that he had not been on operation on this scale "to arrest those who have been committing murders in Chiapas" for some time — a reference to paramilitary groups such as the one involved in the pre-Christmas Acatlan massacre of pro-Zapatista peasants.

Two years ago the government and the EZLN signed an agreement sanctioning the establishment of new municipalities, in accordance with indigenous traditions.

But the government is only now seeking to translate the indigenous rights agreement into law, and the Zapatistas — who suspended peace talks on the grounds of government non-compliance — say the bill does not reflect what was agreed.

Javier Elorriaga, leader of the civilian Zapatista National Liberation Front, said the Taniperla operation was part of a confrontational government plan.

The government's tactics, he said, consisted of "putting out fires by pouring on petrol".

'Pig of an office' sparks feng shui fears in Taiwan's agriculture chief

TAIWAN'S agriculture chief has reportedly followed the advice of a feng shui expert in an effort to ward off pig disease and a host of other misfortunes.

Peng Cho-kuei, chairman of the government's agriculture council, will move to the top floor of the council's 10-storey building to protect himself from the bad luck that has plagued his predecessors, the China Times Express said.

Feng shui — the ancient art of positioning buildings and furniture to bring good luck — is followed avidly in many Asian countries.

The change is to cost taxpayers about \$90,000, according to the newspaper.

The feng shui master blamed the office's location for the fact that Mr Peng's three predecessors were forced out of office early.

The last chairman resigned after an outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease, the first to hit Taiwan in 83 years, led to the slaughter of 3 million pigs.

Their track record has convinced Mr Peng to leave the second-floor office, which sits above a corridor and "lacks solid support" from below. — AP.

Revolt threat to Paris mayor

Paul Webster in Paris

IN A direct challenge to Jacques Chirac, rightwing Paris city councillors have demanded the resignation of Jean Tiberi, the Gaullist he picked as mayor when he gave up the job on his election to the presidency in 1995.

The Gaullist former culture minister Jacques Toubon, who wants the mayor's job as a stepping stone for a presidential challenge in 2002, said Mr Tiberi was anti-democratic. "I refuse to accept Mr Tiberi as master of the city," he said yesterday, commenting on last week's sacking of 12 Gaullist and centre-right assistant mayors who wanted Mr Tiberi to stand down.

The row is symptomatic of a national split in the Gaullist Party, sparked by the president's blunder in calling an early general election last year which resulted in a Socialist-led government. Mr Tiberi's position as one of the most powerful executive office holders in the country is based almost solely on his loyalty to Mr Chirac and he is considered too weak to put down the revolt without presidential backing.

The president, who has al-

ways feared that Paris could become a counterweight to his own authority, may try to save face by asking the Gaullist former prime minister Edouard Balladur to become mayor, in an attempt to reunite the factions. But Mr Balladur, who opposed Mr Chirac in the 1995 presidential race, is waiting until a meeting of Mr Toubon's supporters tomorrow when they will decide on future strategy.

Mr Toubon was angry when Mr Chirac chose Mr Tiberi. His confidence has been revived by the erosion of Gaullist power which began when the 1995 municipal elections ended the right's near monopoly of control in the capital. The right lost heavily in the Paris area in last year's general election and, which caused a new slide in Mr Chirac's popularity rating.

Most rightwing councillors now fear that the city will fall to the left in the 2001 local elections, reducing the right's prospects in the 2002 presidential and general elections. Public confidence in the mayor has been shaken by corruption investigations dating back to Mr Chirac's term as the capital's first elected mayor in 1977.

News in brief

Khmer Rouge 'killed' kidnapped Briton

CHRISTOPHER Howes, the Briton kidnapped by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in March 1976, was shot dead along with his interpreter shortly after their abduction near Angkor Wat, Time magazine reported yesterday. It quoted two disaffected leaders of the group.

One said: "Howes... was taken out to a field and shot in the back by a man named Bao on the orders of a close aide to Pol Pot." It was suggested that Howes, who cleared unexploded land mines, had been killed because Pol Pot disliked foreign involvement in Cambodia. — Reuters, Washington.

US aiding drug lord's doctor

THE United States has given refuge to a doctor involved in a botched plastic surgery operation on a Mexican drug lord who later died, the Washington Post reported at the weekend. Officials confirmed to the paper that Pedro Rincon arrived in November and was placed under the witness protection programme. The drug baron, Amado Carrillo Fuentes, died in July.

Two other doctors involved in the operation had been tortured and killed in Mexico, the Post said. — Reuters, Washington.

Algeria eases abortion rules

ALGERIA'S highest religious body, the supreme Islamic council, has ruled that women who have been raped by "terrorists" can have their pregnancy terminated. Al Khabar, the country's influential Arabic-language newspaper, said yesterday.

The religious edict excluded terminations in "extreme cases", a reference to occasions when the procedure might be a risk to the woman's health. — Reuters, Paris.

Colombian rebels urge union

COLOMBIA'S largest rebel movement urged all "revolutionary" forces to unite and fight US meddling in the country's internal affairs. The call by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was directed at the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN), which last week announced the death of its supreme commander, Spanish-born rebel priest Manuel Pérez.

Plans by the FARC, ELN and the Maoist-inspired People's Liberation Army to set up a joint command in the late 1980s failed because of political and tactical disputes. But some defence experts believe that Pérez's replacement by hardliner Nicolas Rodríguez could pave the way for greater co-ordination between the groups. — Reuters, Bogotá.

Libya 'to help solve bombing'

TRIPOLI has agreed to let Germany question Libyan agents about the bombing of a Berlin disco in 1986 in which two US servicemen and a Turkish woman were killed. Der Spiegel reported at the weekend. Without citing a source, it said emissaries from the Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, had assured Germany of Libya's "readiness with respect to solving the crime".

German prosecutors have tried to implicate Libya in the attack on the disco, which also injured 230 people. The then US president, Ronald Reagan, accused Colonel Gaddafi of ordering the bombing, and retaliated with air strikes on Libya. — AP, Hamburg.

Tanzanian miners feared dead

SOME 90 miners are feared dead in northern Tanzania after flash floods caused pits to collapse, the state-owned Sunday News reported. It said the accident happened at a mine in the town of Mbuguni, 25 miles south-east of the farming town of Arusha.

Miners were trapped as deep as 1,000ft below the surface after the collapse of 14 pits, mined for Tanzanite, a semi-precious stone unique to Tanzania. — Reuters, Dar Es Salaam.

Some enchanted isle

FOR SALE: a South Pacific island with small airstrip and no neighbours. Available immediately. Asking price: \$47 million.

Palmyra atoll, an uninhabited 13 square-mile island about 1,000 miles south of Hawaii, has been put on the market by the Fullard-Leo family of Honolulu, who bought it in 1922. The estate agents said preliminary discussions had been held with representatives of Bill Gates, chairman of Microsoft. — AP, Honolulu.

Pupils held for bomb plot

TWO 15-year-old boys have been arrested on suspicion of threatening to bomb their Oklahoma school in an attempt to kill a teacher. Jefferson County's district attorney, Gene Christian, said. Police were alerted after pupils at Ryan high school found a computer message discussing plans to bomb the school. They found black gunpowder, a paintball cartridge and aluminium arrow shafts in one of the boys' bedrooms. — AP, Ryan.

China's Catholics keep faith



A newly baptised Chinese Catholic family attends an Easter mass at Shanghai's St Ignatius Cathedral, restored after being damaged during the Cultural Revolution. China's state-sanctioned Catholic Church has no ties to the Vatican. In Rome, meanwhile, 150,000 people attended a mass celebrated on the steps of St Peter's by a tired-looking Pope who at one point appeared almost to lose his balance

Volcano clue can't be ducked

A THEORY that people arrived in New Zealand 2,000 years ago — 1,000 years earlier than previously believed — has received a fillip. New Zealand's Dominion newspaper reported at the weekend. Radiocarbon dating of duck bones entombed in volcanic ash almost perfectly matched the date of the eruption — 232 AD.

It is the best evidence so far of the accuracy of carbon-dating of small animal bones. Critics of Richard Holdaway's theory that rats bones carbon-dated as 2,000 years old prove that rats — and people — arrived that long ago argued that carbon dating was not reliable in such cases. — AP, Wellington.

Kohl knows that for the first time he has met his match, the Christian Democrats give a plausible impression of running scared in the face of the Schröder bandwagon. Profiling Germany's next leader?

Comment

Jerusalem Diary

David Sharrock

HOLY Week in Jerusalem. Holy, Schmoly. Have you been up to the Garden of Gethsemane lately? Do you have any idea of just how noisy it gets up there at Easter? Aside from every flavour of Christian under the sun singing Te Deums, Gregorian chants and happy-clappy I've-got-a-tamboourne-and-I'm-gonna-use-it numbers, there are the Israeli policemen adding their shekel's worth. "Don't cross that road yet, get back! Get back!" they scream through megaphones at senior citizens. Since they're screaming it in one of the world's minority languages, very few pilgrims understand until it's too late... and they're almost under the bonnet of a Mercedes driven by a man in a fearsome hurry to get home for the Muslim feast of Eid al-Adha.

Okay, so you make it to the Garden of Gethsemane in one piece and the vicar asks for a few moments' silence to contemplate the agony of Jesus that night after the Last Supper. And just when you begin to discern the beauty of the gilded Dome of the Rock through the garden's ancient olive trees, a dozen mosques in the neighbourhood start up their megaphones and begin wailing "Allah Akbar!" — God is great. The Christians, meanwhile, are being urged by the vicar to shout "Jesus is Lord!", so there's a kind of unkindly singing competition echoing across the royal blue sky.

Good Friday dawn, the pilgrims are consulting their information sheets, trying to sort out their "Liturgies of the Lord's Passion" from their "Adoration of the Cross", "Way of the Cross" and "Calvary". The times for all these events are printed in neat booklets, but nowhere is it written that the Holy Sepulchre works on its own time-zone, because the various sects which run the church couldn't agree between themselves on switching to summer time; from spring until autumn it is an hour behind the rest of the city.

ENTERING the Holy Sepulchre for the first time is a bitter disappointment to many Christians. As Father Jerome Murphy-O'Connor puts it in his magisterial archaeological guide to the Holy Land, "One looks for numinous light, but it is dark and cramped. One hopes for peace but the air is assailed by a cacophony of warring chants. One desires holiness, only to encounter a jealous possessiveness... The frailty of humanity is nowhere more apparent than here."

The slat where the body of Jesus is said to have been laid is almost lost beneath a mass of weeping Russian women, wailing dozens of new handkerchiefs on its smooth surface in the work of creating instant holy relics. "Merde, il marche pas," a French woman swears at her camera. A pigeon roosting in the vaulted ceiling takes flight and craps on the shoulder of a Korean man. Some monks carrying a wooden cross queue-jump at the tomb monument, once famously described as "a hideous kiosk" and now supported by a grid of steel beams and bolts.

"Nobody said it was going to be easy, what with all the pushing and shoving, but I just say remember what it must have been like for Jesus," says Ray, from Alabama. "I've had a wonderful spiritual experience here this week." Perhaps Ray had made his way up to the Holy Sepulchre's roof, where the Ethiopians live in mud huts. Forced by the Copts out of the main building, these dignified, tall and slender monks have created the atmosphere of contemplation that is lacking elsewhere in the central shrine of Christianity.

ALL WENT FINE UNTIL... BUT HERE COMES THE TROUBLE...



This opportunity for peace must not be lost through violence

John Taylor



TWO weeks ago yesterday I attended the funeral of Cyril Stewart, a recently retired RUC officer, at my local Presbyterian congregation in Armagh City. He had been murdered by republican terrorists while late-night shopping with his wife. He was the second-last person to be killed by terrorism in Ulster before the Agreement. After one of the busiest weeks in nearly 35 years in elected politics, I was encouraged by the words of thanks and support from members of the congregation.

In the long days and nights holed up in Caste Buildings, Stormont, there was not time to consult with constituents or many party officials. Instead instinct came into play. Would the unionist community, driven for years to say "No", make the break? When the final document arrived, all these years representing a marginalized community came into play. Exhausted as I was, I had to discern the wood from the trees. Was it the right package for me, and would the people who elected me buy it?

There was much in the document which I knew I could denounce. If our team had decided to reject the document we could have walked out to cheers from many unionists. On the other hand, I knew I would have been isolated at Westminster, lecturing the deaf. Unionism would have been more marginalised than ever. When the new Agreement was put to the House of Commons, I fully expect every single Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat MP to back it. I would not have seen Ulster's unionist community

accepted back into the British mainstream in my lifetime.

When the Anglo-Irish Agreement passed through the House a couple of dozen Conservatives voted with the Unionists against it. Frankly, the idea that it was going to be rescinded through persuasion and pressure at Westminster, rather than through negotiation, was looking increasingly like self-delusion. Margaret Thatcher had the humility to admit she should never have signed it over the heads of the majority in Northern Ireland but, in a House with such a crushing Labour majority, that is little comfort.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement finally fell on Good Friday. The days when another state undemocratically acted as a proxy for a group of citizens in the United Kingdom are over. But, as Peter Robinson MP, of Ian Paisley's anti-Agreement DUP, admitted, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was never going to simply die unless moderate nationalists could be convinced that there was an alternative which satisfied them while meeting unionism's democratic concerns.

DAVID Trimble and our team succeeded in negotiating away the most insupportable nationalist elements of the original draft which I could not have supported with a 40% vote. These had found their way in by the IRA threatening the Dublin Government to break its ceasefire unless the Agreement contained a mechanism to invade Northern Ireland into a 32-county Republic. That mechanism has gone and can be seen to have gone. I urge

sceptical unionists to compare John Major's Framework Documents with the new Agreement.

In its place is a commitment on the part of unionism to set up feasibility studies to consider the merits of cross-frontier and all-Ireland implementation bodies in 12 specific areas. They are not revolutionary. An all-Ireland canal management authority does not represent a significant threat to my citizenship and, besides, a unionist would be present at every North/South meeting carrying a veto. After all, I was a Minister in the old Stormont Government which sent delegates to a Council of Ireland, which was set up explicitly with the purpose of uniting Ireland, and created the Foyle Fisheries Commission, which looks after Lough Foyle which is bounded by British and Irish territory.

Once the new Assembly and other institutions are in place, I envisage the quality and quantity of co-operation with our neighbour which would have pertained had it not been for the IRA's campaign and British and Irish territory. The issue of the Republic's constitution which underpinned it. The North/South dimension of the Agreement will not create 80,000 jobs as former Irish Prime Minister, Albert Reynolds, once claimed but nor do I see it having a negative impact on the economy.

The issue of unionists have raised most often with me in recent days has been the release of convicted terrorist prisoners, so long as their paramilitary group is observing a ceasefire, will be released after

a maximum of two years after the new arrangements come into force. Naturally, this generates strong emotions from their victims. At the same time, I very narrowly survived in 1972 for which no one was ever convicted. What has been missed by the IRA and some unionists alike is that the bulk of those prisoners who qualify were set for release within a similar timeframe anyway.

I was pleased that the moves on prisoners were balanced by real commitments of money to support the victims of terrorist violence and that the long list of pledges to support the Irish language were balanced — after UUP pressure — by a recognition of the Ulster-Scots linguistic tradition. The nationalist community will enjoy the right to express their cultural identity freely, but in a way sensitive to the majority's British way of life. The Union flag as an expression of statehood cannot be equated with the Irish tricolour which acts as the badge of an aspiration.

Unionism can look forward to a new beginning with the return of democratic control — in partnership with the IRA — to a local assembly. I believe that the opportunity Easter 1998 has created cannot be allowed to be lost through violence. It is the duty now of both Governments to put in place the necessary security measures sufficient to give Ulster's people to allow their verdict in a peaceful atmosphere. Otherwise, I see more funerals ahead.

The Rt Hon John D Taylor is MP for Strangford and UUP chief negotiator

Cabbages and kings

Peter Preston



HE IS not invisible. You may glimpse him, with poised regularity, on most Wednesday evening news bulletins. He had a lovely, cosy time with Joan Collins and Patsy a few weeks back. He is in command of his party and — on the latest poll from ICM — in total command of the most visceral issue of the day. He is William Hague.

Sorry, William who? Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition for almost as long as Tony Blair has led Her Majesty's Strangely Docile Government. We'll be wallowing in Anniversary Assessment Syndrome very soon. But while the Blair honeymoon lifts on and on (in the sound of joyous Irish airs this weekend) the Hague honeymoon — bar a couple of weeks in India with Ffion — has never really started. The polls that show his issue (Europe/Euro hostility) backed by 61 per cent to 25 per cent also show his party trailing the discredited hulk John Major brought to retribution a year ago; and Labour doing better, not worse.

Does this matter? In one sense, nothing matters for four more years. The "democratisation" of the Tory machine makes the leader fireproof against the challenge. He's there until the next election and, if he performs brilliantly in narrow defeat, probably until the one after that. He can afford to take his time and let the lower orders exhaust themselves on the Sam Today show; he can afford to lie low and chomp his way round the rubber chicken circuit of party faithful.

But if you're building carefully for the future, you need to have a rough idea how many bricks make five. And that, already, is the problem. The foundations of recovery are a random stew.

THE Hague Conservatives seem grudgingly resigned to Scottish devolution and (hypocritically) bent on sweeping Lords reform. They're always on the move. They nudge repeatedly at the prospect of outflanking Blair in the race for radical change. Labour remains firmly lumbered with the unions and the block vote. William is already ahead there, pushing into policy-making territory the Swiss would tick behind their cuckoo-clocks.

On social attitudes, too, there is beginning to be a small lake of curiosity blue water. "Living together can be a very good and healthy thing to do before marriage," he announced a few days ago. No consecration before copulation. Would the devoutly High Church Blair, yon wonder, be quite so categorical? What does Mr Hague think about Anthony Turner? This is bizarre Tory territory — and not at all welcome to New Labour's strategists, who giggle about a Conservative thrust which tries to outflank them on the left, which pretends that the party of Thatcher is a listening, sexy, gay-loving, altogether swinging outfit. There's rickety confusion along this road — especially if the grass-roots in their local hats are really going to have a bigger say.

At the core, however, gay rights and marriage rites are merely the pink and blue icing on this exceedingly odd cake. What counts is what has counted most for the Conservatives for 15 scratchy years: Europe. And here William Hague has moved in the other direction. Where, five years back, you might have guessed that John Major was actually a pragmatic pro-European dressed in a sceptic suit, now Hague is the precise reverse. Deep down he's a sceptic; the pragmatic pantaloons are merely for show.

Here, surely, he's on to something big? ICM shows the anti-euro alliance strengthening markedly. A majority of voters in all three major parties recoils at the thought of membership. Those old

phobes who reckoned the single currency was an election winner have something to laugh about at last.

Yet how are present anti-euro phobes to be translated into future realities — real votes in real elections and referendums way after the next millennium? Welcome to the swamp. If the euro, limping into life over the coming three years, makes a stumbling start, then that ought to be good for Hague? Yes; but not very good. Mr Blair and Mr Brown aren't reckoning on an emu referendum in this parliament anyway. They won't want to sign up for a sticky euro either come 2002. No issue: no bonus.

On the other hand, though, emu might make a racing start: one bunched by the performance of recovering continental economies spurring just as Britain slides into recession. That doesn't look as propitious for Young William. Ken Clarke, Hezza and the rest will be intoning away: the ghosts of schism returned from the City. The CBI will be hopping with anxiety, its traditional purse strings drawn tight. A cheap weekend at one of Sir Rocco Forte's new hotels isn't going to compensate for that.

Worse, on analysis, the cutting edge of Europe as a general election decider will come wrapped in all the usual soiled bandages. The Tories won't be against ever joining emu. They are stuck with chanting, yet again, that this time isn't right. Will it be better in 10 years? What does "right" mean in any case? Dry lips recite dog formulas about "many years of experience" of the new system, of satisfactory cohesion through recession, of growing manufacturing balances, of cabbages and kings.

That isn't a crusade. It's a fudge. Where winning elections is concerned, it pulls a hamstring on the first lap. Of



The pragmatic pantaloons are merely for show

course the referendum on emu — when and if it follows — is quite another matter. Then Blair, Brown, Ashdown and Clarke can take on Hague, Redwood, David Owen and Peter Shore in simple combat over a simple proposition: yes or no? Then Hague can say "not yet" and have some hopes of victory — which, in turn, would pull the second Blair administration to pieces and eventually precipitate a second election.

The good news about such a distant triumph is obvious: the bad news is that a new Conservative government, fatally alienated from all its most powerful backers, would then be doomed to make sense of stretching European isolation for a decade or more. Losing the referendum means listening to the will of the people and junking all your scepticism (along, of course, with the loss leader).

It is not an altogether alluring prospect, Hague, almost a year in, still has only one great issue on his plate. The voters, and his natural inclinations, urge to him run with it. But where to, and how? If the rest of the bricks the education, the health, the housing — were falling into shape, then there might be escape from the continuing nightmare of European calculation. Stand by your man! Absolutely. But remember Tammy Wynette's other smash hit D.I.V.O.R.C.E.

Emphasis on the three Rs in education should not be at the expense of intellectual enrichment

Electric shocks

Isabel Hilton

LAST week Lord Putnam gave a speech to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers annual conference in Bournemouth, complaining that British schools were about to drop the requirement to teach art and music, history, geography design and PE as obligatory subjects.

Schools can, of course, continue to offer them, but they will no longer be obliged to, and, given the current obsession with the meeting national targets in the three Rs and the pressures of money and of time, the likelihood, he feared, that that schools would be tempted to take the easy way out. And why not? Surely literacy and numeracy must take precedence over such trills as art and music? Lord Putnam thinks otherwise.

Of course, it's not impossible that a film-maker of genius could outwit the teachers and fight his or her way through to achievement, despite the apparent desire of our educational system to suffocate cre-

ativity. But it would be a gamble and it's time we stopped gambling with talent.

The kind of imagination and visual thinking that makes a film-maker, an artist or an architect, is not an accident of extra that a society can permit itself only when it has attended to the serious business of education. It is, for a large minority, the way the mind works and the essential means of self-expression. Stifle that and we don't know what we may lose.

The ability to think visually is a gift that finds expression not just in artistic careers. It can be the difference between pedestrian performance and real originality in science and mathematics too. And, personally, those who think that everything of value to education can be measured by multiple choice papers, it is often coupled with poor performance in tests. Take, for instance, the case of Michael Faraday, explored in the American writer Thomas West's book, *The Mind's Eye*.

Faraday was one of the greatest scientists of his age,

perhaps of any age. He was a self-taught blacksmith's son who had an acute visual sense and was able to use it to form original models of reality in his mind, regardless of whether those models corresponded to the accepted scientific notions of his day. His discoveries, in the 1830s, laid the ground for the revolution in technology that we have

It is time we stopped gambling with talent

lived through. But though his work was the starting point from which, 60 years later, Albert Einstein set out on his own epoch-making path to discovery, Faraday was no great shakes as a mathematician. It fell to James Clerk Maxwell in the 1860s to render Faraday's visions into mathematical equations. Maxwell, unlike Faraday, would have called through the maths tests.

By the narrow standards we seem to be adopting in education, that would make Maxwell a cleverer and more successful pupil than the laggard Faraday, but that is not how Maxwell saw things. For him, Faraday's genius was uncontested.

As he wrote on Faraday's ideas, he wrote: "I perceived that his method of conceiving the phenomena was also a mathematical one, though not exhibited in the conventional form of symbols. I also found that these methods were capable of being expressed in the ordinary mathematical forms."

In 1864, Maxwell's equations made it possible to deduce the nature of the interrelationship of electricity and magnetism under all conditions. They provided the foundation of modern physics and are still valid, more than a century later.

Reading and writing are important, of course, and not every child who has trouble with basic maths is a Faraday. But some are. The more we reduce educational measures to narrow and reductive tests,

the greater the likelihood that we exclude children whose genius at the higher reaches of a subject might be obscured by their difficulties at the basic level. It is not a matter of intelligence, but of the way individual intelligence works. The narrower the core of subjects that we recognise as important, the narrower the type of intelligence that we recruit. Art and music, history, geography and design are not luxuries to be squeezed in if there is time and money. They are the stimulus to the imagination and the canvas on which a child can paint an idea.

Which is more valuable — a child who can respond to the sterile prompting of a multiple choice test or a child who can see in his or her mind's eye a pattern that the rest of us are unable to imagine? Without Faraday, Maxwell would not have produced his equations. Without the visual imagination, we cannot make those leaps that take us beyond the knowledge we have received. Lord Putnam is a member of the Government's task force on school standards. I hope they listen to him.

Guardian

Lessons for militants
Blair still the priority

Letters to the Editor
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Endpiece: W

by Watersley

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Lessons for militants

Education still the priority

HAS NOTHING changed? Easter is here and the air is filled once again with angry teacher denunciations of the Government. One moderate union last week heard its president accuse Tony Blair of betraying the voters by aping Tory education policies. The two bigger unions meeting this weekend, have agendas filled with angry motions on phased pay, red tape, naming and shaming schools, new procedures to sack incompetent teachers, and inspectors who dare to fall short. There are threats of strikes and boycotts. What has happened to a government which insisted its priority would be education, education, education?

Some of the grumbles are justified. The teachers have good cause to be angry about pay. For the third year running, a moderate pay increase is being phased in. But this year it was worse because the phasing was in contradiction of the independent pay review body, which asked for it to be implemented in full. The teachers are also justified in protesting over the mountains

of paperwork which divert them from their classroom activity. Their complaints were upheld by a report from the special working party examining the problems in January. Belatedly ministers are now moving on this front. Delegates should take note of the reassuring signals from the schools minister's unscheduled visit to last week's conference, even before they hear the Education Secretary speak today.

But once again militant members are putting narrow trade interests before children's interests. These are the conferences which over the last decade and a half have condemned the national curriculum and national testing — two Conservative initiatives which the independent Commission on Education described as among the most important education reforms since the second world war. Now the militants want to try and boycott the Government's education action zones, an imaginative new bid to raise standards. The militants are unhappy because the zones will test out new working practices, such as homework clubs and Saturday schools. Such initiatives are desperately needed.

It's not all bad news. The militants' motion on action zones was defeated yesterday at the NUT conference. Union leaders have agreed new procedures which will

allow incompetent teachers to be eased out more quickly. These procedures were necessary if Britain is ever to catch up with standards in other developed states. The NUT leader is being more robust on taking on his militants, who know they do not have the support of the rank and file, but continue to indulge in "political posturing".

A new government has set out some clear objectives and should not be judged on its first 11 months, not least because of its imprudent adoption of Conservative spending limits for its first two years. Even within these limits, there will be an extra 60,000 places for under-fives by September, a large injection of cash for long-delayed repairs and new buildings, and a special allocation to end all outside toilets. Ministers are committed to reducing class sizes for five, six and seven-year-olds during this parliament. They are encouraging good teachers to stay in the classroom with the introduction of an advanced skills teacher grade this September. A General Teaching Council will be set up by 2000 and all new head teachers will require special qualifications. These are serious reforms.

Several problems remain, with recruitment near the top. Last week a union survey suggested two-thirds of all secondary school pupils reject teaching as a career

choice. They have observed at first hand the stress under which teachers are working. There are lessons here for ministers and militants. Ministers must recognise the crucial importance of obtaining more resources for education. But the professional trade should recognise how much damage their annual Eastertime posturing does to the reputation of their profession. Any undisciplined graduate watching their trades could be forgiven for saying this is not a profession they wish to join.

Chicken on eggs

Act now to ban battery cages

WHERE DID you find your Easter eggs? Under a bush? In the tree stump? Far more likely in a giant, barren, windowless battery farm hidden behind a curtain of political deceit with a misleading label. Never mind yesterday's chocolate egg-fest, 86 per cent of our 33 million laying hens live in conditions that are consistently condemned by the courts as "cruel" and by government, vets and the EU as unacceptable. Up to eight hens will be confined in wire cages the size of this page of the Guardian. All will degenerate physically under the stress

and one-third can expect to live with broken or fractured bones until they are slaughtered after a shortened life. Britain says it wants to ban battery cages but is unconvincing, having been persuaded by the agribusiness lobby not to act before the rest of Europe. The EU, in turn, is over-cautious and has proposed a new battery hen directive which would merely tinker with the cage size rather than banning it.

But as the animal welfare group Compassion in World Farming shows, there are viable alternatives: the barn or perchery system allows hens to live in a loose flock, the deep-litter system gives three times the minimum space and free range allows 1,000 hens per hectare. If Agriculture Secretary Jack Cunningham is really committed to animal welfare and the radical overhaul of food production, he should press Europe to outlaw the battery system over a period of years. We have developed a barbaric agriculture that rewards cruelty in the name of cheap food, tacitly promotes low nutrition standards and consistently devastates the environment. How we treat our hens is eloquent of the value we place on healthy food. Three pence — the rough price difference between a free range and battery egg — is a small price to pay for a start to urgently needed reform.

Letters to the Editor

Air travel, art, sex and Cilla

It appears to be an obsession of the travelling public to complain (Letters, April 11). Being married to someone who flies for a living, I hear all the stories of grumpy passengers who expect a lot from a very hard working crew. OK, the food's not cordon bleu and the plane may not be like the Ritz, but people eat takeaways from converted ambulances and think nothing of it. Martin Priestnall, Reading, Berks.

WINSTON Fletcher says (1981: The Truth, April 9) that the Festival of Britain was not as popular as many suppose, quoting in support that the same year Labour lost the general election. In fact Labour won more votes than the Tories, and more than it has won at any election before or since. Brian Barber, London.

THE Festival of Britain's aesthetics discredited? How refreshing they are beside the cloying kitsch we are drowning under now. David Gibbs, London.

ARTIST "Nat Tate", a jolly A-Jape (Books, April 9) — all is forgiven. But "Joseph Buys" — is he for real? Or was your exhibition review (April 7) the "low" "mockery" of a leg-pull "elaborately pursued"? Can we ever know? Marie McDougall, London.

NOTE that Lt Col Pople and Lt Cmdr Pearce had sex on the morning of the armistice, but respected the two-minute silence. Was he standing to attention at the time? Neil Meadows, Haslemere, Surrey.

WHAT on earth is Cilla. Black doing in Equity anyway (Cilla Blacked in and dispute, April 10)? Has she only been pretending to be a lovely chirpy scouse match-maker all this time? John Swan, Whitby Bay, Tyne and Wear.

Tasks ahead for Ireland's peacemakers

INCREDIBLY then there is a deal ("Please make it work", April 11). This represents a triumph for politics over violence. The question now is whether the parties' respective constituencies will be similarly far-sighted.

David Trimble faces the hardest job in selling this deal. He has not moved as far as Gerry Adams, but he has given up things he held dear. He must try and sell his position as a success, given his leadership role within the new assembly. Adams can just go along grudgingly.

Trimble's claim to have strengthened the union relies on the idea that a consensual commitment to a watered-down version of the union is a better bet than a non-consensual one to a purist alternative. If this agreement is not resoundingly endorsed, however, he will be seen to have bartered away a principle without obtaining any change in the uncertain future faced by his people.

It is imperative therefore that everything be done to bolster his position. But equally

it is time to remind the unionist people of their responsibilities. If the Ulster people bring this agreement down, it should be made clear to them that the British government will no longer be in a position to fund the entire costs of security and the expense of policing contentious parades. Nick Martin-Clark, London.

THE minimum gesture of goodwill from the Unionists would be to renounce voluntarily those five Loyalist marches out of 3,500 that nationalists find most objectionable. The most reasonable quid pro quo to balance their demand for rather meaningless changes to the wording of the constitution of what to them is a foreign country would be to remove from the constitution of the Orange Order its fostering of hatred of all things Catholic. Gerald McAravery, Warrington, Cheshire.

WHILST most people would hope the agreement results in a lasting peace, history would seem to

suggest that it will not. Aside from its assumption that paramilitary groups will decommission weapons, this agreement is predicated upon the disappearance of two age-old, conflicting ideologies. That is unlikely to happen. Far from promoting the successful integration of nationalist and loyalist interests, this agreement seeks to conclude that on the basis of recent dialogue, they no longer exist; that ancient animosities and aspirations are no longer a factor.

We have witnessed "complete and total cessations" before. They are viewed by the main players as tactical exercises en route to a well planned endgame. If the end is not achieved, the means are changed. I suspect this "New Deal" is merely the latest means to two very different ends that are not going away. Mike Reaham, Birmingham.

FOR decades the Catholic minority in Ulster lived their lives under a form of "apartheid", with manifold abuses of their civil rights. For this, history was always,

eventually, going to send the Protestant community a message, and it must be in the form of some executive power ceded to an external government that the Catholics can trust to ensure that those years of "apartheid" never return. Martin McDowell, Glastonbury, Somerset.

AS long as the two communities go to separate churches and send their children to separate schools they will continue living apart in mutual suspicion and distrust. Yet it seems no account after the men have been slugging it out for years and getting nowhere, he can't quite stomach the fact that the contribution of a woman has made the difference? Emma and Carole Salaymuri, London.

SURELY Mo Mowlam and George Mitchell should be awarded the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize? Roger Quinn, Silloth, Cumbria.

Ambassadors urge understanding of delicate political situations

[SHOULD like to point out misleading assertions and unsubstantiated allegations in your recent article (The voice of Algeria could not silence, April 2). "President Zeroual's military-led government" completely ignores the fact that Liamine Zeroual has been elected in multi-party elections held in the presence of international observers, which was an unprecedented event not only for Algeria, but for the whole region. The government, headed by a civilian, includes no army officer. The military is only visible because of the struggle against terrorism.

Your journalist talks about "dubiously held elections". If he is referring to the accusations of rigging of the recent local elections, he should know that they only involved 1.6 per cent of the polling stations. The courts have decided to oversee a new sharing-out of some seats. What is of more significance is the setting-up of a parliamentary investigation committee made up of members of several parties. The head of government and ministers have testified before the committee on this matter. This is also unprecedented in our region.

You also state Algerian institutions and leaders are "universally held in fear and contempt" when they have been freely elected in the country's first democratic and transparent elections. As for your assertion,

"many Western governments suspect the regime has orchestrated some of the violence", you fail to name a single one. A Benaymina, Algerian Ambassador, London.

SINCE Latvia regained its independence in 1991, our relations with Russia have developed on the basis of mutual understanding, although on a delicate footing. Now President Veltins has urged his government to consider economic sanctions (Yeltsin threatens sanctions, April 9) because of Latvia's supposed inadequate policy towards its Russian-speaking minority.

Such a step will not promote the integration of non-citizens, who have equal social, economic and other rights with citizens, into Latvian society. The Latvian Naturalisation Board has recently published a study of the process. Undoubtedly this will be a core element in analysing the reasons for the inadequate speed of the process and will lead to improvements.

Any issues of concern should be raised in international forums like the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, and the Council of Baltic Sea States. The government of Latvia provides full transparency in these matters and is open for diplomatic dialogue on the highest level. Normans Penke, Latvian Ambassador, London.



The pragmatic participants are more for show



Profiting from political correctness

The new Diana

YOU comment on Cherie Booth (Yesterday, April 8). "Step forward the new Diana". I see little to compare between a busy highly professional barrister and a wealthy young woman who between buying a fantastic amount of clothes and exotic holidays dabbled in high-profile charities. Lily Hoffman, New Malden, Surrey.

THERE are few women of child-bearing age other than Cherie Blair and her Islington pals who earn anything close to £1 million a year. They may well be able to do without pregnancy leave, but millions of women cannot and are now forced to make that old choice between family or work. Few can afford to make the first choice. Cherry Mostesher, Oxford.

Endpiece: Who said that?

Roy Hattersley



HAVE spent an agonising weekend trying to decide whether I should report the Guardian to the Press Complaints Commission or recommend Matthew Engel for a place at Cardiff when Ian Hargrave moves from the editor's seat at the New Statesman to the chair of Journalism in that university. My dilemma was the result of Mr Engel's Saturday column, which at least in part was based on my maiden speech in the House of Lords. I claimed to report what I said. "He quoted the local MP from his Sheffield childhood, whose policy for the Lords was 'Don't

mend them, and them' Naturally he became a vicar." My objection to those sentences concerns quotation marks. It was I not Mr Engel who drew ironic attention to A.V. Alexander's elevation. Heaven knows, I do not begrudge him the joke. These days, cricket correspondents need all the jokes they can get — old, new, borrowed or blue. But the omission of the appropriate inverted commas enabled an illustration of how, in the end, all peacocks corrupt and life peacocks corrupt absolutely. With my punctuation, the anecdote reveals the origin of my opposition to the Upper House. With Mr Engel's it illustrates how I, like poor old A.V., had been seduced by the place.

When I say that Mr Engel got me wrong, I refer to more than the misquotation. It is the practising politician who have passages wrestled out of their speeches and misquoted against them. And quoted as I am, long ago and far away. I want to embark on the post-parliamentary journey which Denis Healey says awaits retired practitioners of the rough old

trade. It is divided into three stages — highly respected, much loved and dead. I heard the rattle of time's winged bath chair when, a couple of weeks ago, I submitted to insistent demands that I should have my ears tested. From the moment that a young woman struck her elbow with a tuning fork and played a note on my forehead, I realised that no good could come of it. As the sound reverberated round my skull, I recalled the precedents were not encouraging. Ten years ago, I decided to bequeath my ears to an eye bank. But I had to abandon my benevolent scheme when I could not read the small print on the donor form. Organ-wise, it has been all downhill for a full decade.

The decision publicly to acknowledge my conditions was made infinitely easier by the discovery that the US president wears two hearing aids — one, I hasten to add, in each ear. Recent reports suggest that (despite premature deafness) he is, in other respects, in full working order — full, indeed, to over-look. Bill Clinton's early incapacity reminded me of

Johnny Ray — a teenage idol, despite the huge electronic device which was stuck to the side of his head. To acknowledge a slight disadvantage in the hearing department was not, I decided, the same as agreeing to put my name down for a Zimmer frame. I was also comforted by the knowledge that my syndrome is inherited from my mother. She also suffers from malicious and unfounded allegations that she is deaf. When I took her to have her excellent hearing confirmed by a doctor, he did no more than shout a question about how loud she turned up the television. And when she replied that she rarely made long-distance calls these days, the examination ended.

SO AS the young woman who examined me began to fasten apparatus on my head, I asked the name of the auxiliary medicine which she practised. She seemed to answer "orthology". Though I may have been mistaken, for she spoke very indistinctly. It was impossible to repeat my question since she was sending me little

sonic messages through my headphones. Each time I heard a beep, I was supposed to squeeze the rubber ball which she had put into my hand. The beeps, when I heard them, were repeated with the precision of a metronome. So I may have got into the habit of squeezing at regular intervals and signified recognition long after the noise had faded. However, I feel absolutely certain that was not why my hearing was adjudged to be only slightly impaired and that solely in certain limited registers.

Before the young woman had completed her graphs and given me the good news, I asked her to confirm that, whatever my condition, it was unconnected with growing old. She responded by inquiring whether I had ever played in an amplified rock band or been involved at either end of an artillery bombardment. When I told her I had escaped both horrors she said, "Then it's your age", and added (I thought rather gratuitously): "It's wear and tear. It will gradually get worse." But, for the time being, it was up to me to decide if a hearing aid would help.

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Durbridge... few peers at getting an audience's attention and keeping it

Francis Durbridge

Serial thriller supreme

FRANCIS Durbridge, who has died aged 85, was the supremely ingenious master of the radio and television mystery serial and the (slightly less successful) stage play. He may be best remembered for creating Paul Temple, a seminal detective half way between the country house detectives and their companions, or "foes", and the treat-em-rough breed without respect for the sexual Queensberry rules.

But Durbridge's talents were essentially those of the old-fashioned maker of intellectual crime puzzles around stock characters beloved in the genre: the school of crooked solicitors, scapegrace younger sons, blackmailing butlers and other characters described by one critic as having "motive without motivation". Depth of character was not his forte but in getting an audience's attention, and keeping it, he had few peers in his generation.

Durbridge went to Bradford Grammar School, Wyke Green College and Birmingham University. He was put into a stockbroker's office but soon rebelled and started to write short stories and plays for BBC radio, then a popular, as well as culturally important, cottage industry.

He moved across to television in 1952, by creating the first adult TV serial in this country, *The Broken Horse-shoe*, and followed this up with *Portrait of Alison*, *My Friend Charles*, *The Other Man*, *The Scarf*, *The World of Tim Frazier*, *Melissa*, *Out of Hell*, *Suspect like a Fox*, *The Doll and the Detective*. At one time it was said that there were 25 different translations of Durbridge serials throughout the world.

They were all well-made pieces of machinery into which a few deftly sketched "stage" characters went through the motions of dramatic conflict. When they appeared on the live stage, their artificiality stood out more starkly. But *Suspect like a Fox* and *Portrait of Alison* were devised as plays from a phrase in print (in this case the death

notice of a friend). He also wrote *Gentle Hook*, *House Guest*, *Murder with Love*, *Daddy Nightcap* and *A Touch of Danger*. The very titles were a left-over from a more literary age.

Although he had a wife and two sons, Nicholas and Stephen, Durbridge cultivated an air of mystery almost as sinisterly staged as his characters, so that one was tempted to imagine a monocled predator with one black gloved hand, a long cigarette holder and a male secretary nicknamed Phyllis. In fact he was quietly workman-like and fond of telling interviewers, with teasing hesitation, that his secret was hard work, carried out in his office above his garage in Walton on Thames or, more latterly, his home in Barnes.

Durbridge always denied that his heroes, such as Paul Temple, and his sinister villains were a sort of wish fulfilment, a means of breaking out of his respectable Thames-side life. "Flying to Hollywood — that's exciting enough for me," he claimed in tones teasingly constructed to make the interviewer think there was some dark secret that would fascinate his readers if only he could get at it.

Interviewers never did. People who worked with him thought him a great manipulator of audiences in the Alfred Hitchcock mould — a man whose whole life was similarly tied up with that process. His profound dislike of talking about himself was an extension of that. He thought that if an audience focused on him and his per-

sonality, it would detract from their concentration on his work and the illusions and tricks in it that he was determined to exploit and protect.

In general, the man who had his first radio play accepted when he was 21 was fired only by his own ideas and observations: people who came to him with ideas were usually rewarded with a blank expression. What he needed was his own observations, often of happenings very slight in themselves. Paul Temple, the hero on whom the BBC spent more on a crime series than it had ever done before, was based on a man Durbridge happened to see on a train at Leamington Spa. The sight of a man in a restaurant taking the wrong hat from the pegs

would give him an idea for a plot and from there he worked with a Swiss-watch precision that few of his contemporaries could rival, so that the mere announcement of his name over the airwaves could alert the listener or viewer to the fact that some unique tension was about to develop.

Part of his skill was in latching on to arresting titles, and here he was often inspired by other people. When he made his West End debut as a playwright in 1971 at the tiny Fortune theatre, the play was *Suddenly at Home*. This title fell into his lap when he read an obituary of a friend who had "died suddenly at home". One of his popular television series, was suggested by David Lean's description of the opening of his film *Lawrence of Arabia* as being "as quick as lightning, going like a bat out of hell".

Those who worked closely with Durbridge had a warm view of him. Shaun Sutton, head of BBC TV serials in the late 1960s, said: "We had 46 thriller episodes a year then and Francis would do us a couple a year. He was very approachable. If you got him to a party or reception, he was fairly quiet and did not rush into conversation. He was very unobtrusive as a person, very theatrical in his writing. He did not give his secrets away."

Sutton saw Durbridge as the leader of the mystery writers who replaced the academic detective story writers of the 1930s. John Tydemann, head of BBC radio drama, believed that Durbridge was without peer in the radio thriller and was even more appreciated in other countries where there were once complaints that workers failed to turn up to work — even in Germany — when his serials were on radio or TV.

He is survived by his wife, Norah, and their two sons.

Dennis Barker

Francis Henry Durbridge, dramatist, born November 25, 1912; died April 11, 1998

forces with a demolition expert, but, with that genuine charm and confidence of someone for whom good manners came naturally, he let me go away with a suitcaseful of scripts. From that first meeting came my adaptation of *Melissa*.

Most writers, myself included, treat their scripts as though they are their babies and only reluctantly give them up for adoption with dire threats of the consequences if the baby grows up to be a Jackie Collins novel. Francis was far more generous than that. Late one night I rang him up in despair. I fully intended to stay faithful to his characters and plot, but it was becoming impossible to do so with the passage of time and social mores since the original *Melissa* in 1961.

"Oh good God, dear boy," he said. "It isn't Dickens, and I wrote it 30 years ago. Throw it over your shoulder and get on with it."

Finally, I knew, through my friendship with one of

his sons, Stephen, that the last few years, in inevitable declining physical health, had been wickedly cruel for him and for Norah, his beautiful wife of nearly 60 years. The last time I visited him he was, while intellectually as undiminished as ever, clearly in considerable pain and in a wheelchair. His spirit, however, was still soaring and he was consumed with a determination to continue to drive.

Against all protests, he visited a testing centre and took his chances on a simulator. Rumour has it that he "killed" seven people just trying to get petrol. It was only on the way home, safely in the passenger seat, that he announced his retirement from driving. Through gritted teeth.

He told Stephen recently that growing old was not for cissies. Francis Durbridge was not a cissie. He was a good and honourable man and a superb craftsman.

Alan Bleasdale

them, most sports writers recycle them. In baseball, managers make out lineups, fielders hug the line, and batters hit drives that, if caught, are called line-outs. In football, linebackers form a second line of defence behind the linemen at the line of scrimmage. It wouldn't be out of line to say that without lines most sports would border on chaos.

From *Sports Illustrated*.

Flying life

THREE of us joined Alex for a day at the north London airfield where Mr James keeps his plane. Alex had convinced us that flying was a terrific pleasure, and also wasn't financially out of reach of the ordinary mortal.

The airfield was like something out of a James Bond film. There must have been over a hundred little planes, in various states of coolness and repair, dotted over this little corner of England. Futuristic curvy ones rubbed shoulders with biplanes. A Lear jet nestled in the dis-

sonality, it would detract from their concentration on his work and the illusions and tricks in it that he was determined to exploit and protect.

In general, the man who had his first radio play accepted when he was 21 was fired only by his own ideas and observations: people who came to him with ideas were usually rewarded with a blank expression. What he needed was his own observations, often of happenings very slight in themselves. Paul Temple, the hero on whom the BBC spent more on a crime series than it had ever done before, was based on a man Durbridge happened to see on a train at Leamington Spa. The sight of a man in a restaurant taking the wrong hat from the pegs

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ance. A couple of insect-like helicopters too. There wasn't the tiniest hint of the impersonal futurism of modern airports. This was a land of goggles, intrepid adventurers and freedom. The Customs hut, for example, was conspicuously unmanned. The only proper building, among the Portakabins and hangars, was the airfield café.

Alex James introduced us to Tony Ryan, his instructor.

the Idler

THE Idler goes flying with Alex from Blair.

No end to it

APOCALYPTIC belief is hard to take seriously. Why? As Marina Benjamin tells us succinctly: "Obvious as it may seem, the first thing to say about the end of the world is that it has not yet happened."

To date, every real, or metaphorical, clock known to man has ticked on blithely past every apocalyptic deadline, and every millennial prophet has, in effect, been exposed as a fool or a liar. Among primitive peoples, the none-fulfillment of prophecy has, on occasion, led to terrifying

convulsions of the social order. In the modern West, however, the chief function of the doomsday prophet has been to keep us amused.

The "Great Disappointment" of 1844, in which thousands of Americans stood on hillsides waiting for the Rapture predicted by William Miller, may have represented the worst outbreak of millennial fever in western history, but it was also the moment at which society decided to file end-time speculation under L for Loony. The Millerites discovered this when they sheepishly crept back to their homes the morning after.

"What not gone up there?" asked their neighbours between gusts of laughter.

Living at the end of the world, by Marina Benjamin, in *Literary Review*.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail Jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4368; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER

Archbishop Serapheim

Churchman of war and peace

SERAPHEIM, Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, who has died aged 84, was the leading figure in the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church which, nominally at least, claims the allegiance of some 85 per cent of the Greek population.

Born Bessarion Tikas in the small town of Artesianon in the rich agricultural province of Thessaly, he was educated at the gymnasium of Karditsa before attending seminaries in Arta and Corinth. He was ordained a priest in 1942 and as a monk of the monastery of Pendeli near Athens, one of the richest in Greece, and studied theology at the University of Athens in the late 1940s.

As an archimandrite, one of the celibate clergy from whom bishops are drawn, he ministered during the harsh years of the occupation in Athens, where he was active in trying to mitigate the effects of appalling famine which in the winter of 1941-42 alone took over 100,000 lives and prompted the foundation of the Oxford Committee for Fam in the Balkans.

At the same time he began to make a name for himself as an ecclesiastical bureaucrat in the Holy Synod, the supreme authority of the Orthodox Church in Greece. He also enlisted in EDES (National Republican Greek League), the largest non-communist resistance group, which was headed by General Napoleon Zervas. For his resistance work he subsequently received a number of decorations.

In 1949, at the early age of 36, he was elected bishop of Arta. Nine years later he became bishop of Jannina, the principal city of Epirus in north-west Greece where he exercised his episcopal duties with characteristic energy and embarked on an extensive programme of church building and charitable work. He also played a significant role in the cultural life of the provincial capital, being one of the early champions of the establishment of a University in Jannina, which was one of the first to break the monopoly hitherto enjoyed by the universities of Athens and Thessaloniki.

He also took a leading role in publicising the plight of the substantial Greek minority in the region of southern Albania known in Greece as Northern Epirus. These Northern Epirotes had fallen victim to the anti-religious campaign of the Albanian communist party boss, Enver Hoxha, who in 1967 decreed



Serapheim... for church and country

the abolition of all manifestations of religious practice throughout Albania. In the 1950s, Serapheim also emerged as a prominent supporter of the cause of the enosis, or union, of Cyprus with Greece.

It was the establishment of the military dictatorship in April 1967 that resulted in Serapheim's elevation to the highest ecclesiastical office. One of the earliest acts of the Colonels as they embarked on their seven-year period of misrule had been to install the learned Ieronymos Kotsonis as Archbishop. When his patron, Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, was ousted by Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis in November 1973, Ieronymos was likewise deposed. Ioannidis, exploiting a tradition of meddling by the civil power in the affairs of the Church dating back to the earliest years of the independent Greek state, characteristically engineered the election of his own nominee — Serapheim — as the new Archbishop of Athens and all Greece. Whereas Ieronymos had been unanimously elected by a synod composed

of eight bishops nominated by the Junta, Serapheim was elected on the vote of 20 members of a synod of 32 bishops, nominated by the Ioannidis regime out of a total of 66 bishops in the country as a whole.

When, a few months after his enthronement, the Colonels' regime collapsed under the burden of its own incompetence, Serapheim remained in office despite the purges of junta appointees in other areas. With the restoration of democracy, Serapheim moved swiftly to repair relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul and with the other Orthodox churches which had suffered during Ieronymos's tenure as Archbishop. He negotiated a new constitutional framework for the Church which was voted in Parliament in 1977. He showed little inclination, however, to soften the Church's hegemonistic stance towards Greece's small Protestant and Catholic minorities. The constitutional ban on religious proselytism remained.

Serapheim's concerns tended to be narrowly parochial and he made little impact on the world ecumenical scene. He did take measures to improve the educational level of parish clergy but some believed these did not go far enough.

When Andreas Papandreu's PASOK came to power in 1981, Serapheim was unable to resist the introduction of civil marriage, the introduction of divorce by mutual consent and the removal of adultery from the catalogue of criminal offences.

His tenure of the archiepiscopal throne was a long one, lasting 23 years. Although he had the many talents and personal skills to hold together an institution much given to factionalism and riven with constitutional disputes, he did not display any great vision of the role of the Church in a rapidly evolving society. The structure and, indeed, the personnel of the Church tended to reflect the country's agrarian past and did not reflect the flight to the cities that has been such a characteristic feature of Greek society since the second world war. The promise that he had manifested during the early years of his episcopate was never really fulfilled during his time as archbishop.

Richard Clogg

His Beatitude Serapheim, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, born October 28, 1913; died April 9, 1998

Birthdays

Stephen Byers, MP, school standards minister, 45; Claude Chyngon, French socialist and former foreign minister, 78; Alan Clark, historian, diarist and Conservative MP, 70; Liam Cosgrave, former leader, Fine Gael, Eire, 78; Mike Daniels, trumpet band-leader and actor, 71; Stanley Dopen, film director and producer, 74; Frank Doran, Labour MP, 46; David Drew, Labour MP, 46; Edward Fox, actor, 61; Prof A H Halsey, sociologist, 75; Rosemary Langton, writer, philosopher and theologian, 71; Seamus Heaney, poet, 59; Gary Kasparov, chess champion, 35; Howard Keel, singer and actor, 80; Dame Margaret Price, opera singer, 57; Jonjo O'Neill, racehorse trainer, 46; Barbara Porter, Wagnerian minister, Board of Trade, 44; John Swinney, Scottish Nationalist MP, 34; Lord (Bill) Wedderburn, authority on labour law, 71; Rudora Welty, novelist, 85; Sir John Weston, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, 69; Marjorie Yates, actress, 57.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

CONTRARY to a report on Page 8, Online, April 9, Computing and the Net, George Lucas, the movie mogul behind *Star Wars*, has not purchased the rights to *Star Trek* from Paramount Pictures, and so there are no plans to develop a hybrid video game featuring characters from both films. The story on which the movie report was based has been circulating on the Internet since April 1, and originated from the Web site www.gamcenter.com.

IN A News in brief item, page 21, April 8, we stated that BP's chairman, John Browne, had said the company intended to spend \$1 billion on buying back its shares. This should have been \$2 billion.

IN THE obituary of Tammy Wynette, page 18, April 8, we misquoted the name of the singer. Porter Wagoner, who also described him as "Dolly Parton's one-time husband", which he was not. Parton was a singer on the Porter Wagoner TV show and a long-time collaborator, but they never married. The album described as *Honky Tonk Angels* was in fact *Honky Tonk Angels*. That album was by Parton, Wynette and Loretta Lynn and Wynette, Lynn and Kitty Wells. On Page 8, G2, April 9, the name of Wynette's husband, George Richey, was misspelled.

IN AN article on the Finance and Economics page, Page 27, March 28, we wrongly stated that the Virgin Flyer tracks the FTSE-100 index. In fact, it tracks the All-Share.

IN Pass Notes, Page 3, G2, April 9, we said Jonah Lomu single-handedly destroyed England in the 1995 World Cup semi-final by walking all over Rory Underwood. We should have said Tony Underwood.

A WORK by Joseph Butts, *Fax Chair* (1984-85), shown on Page 11, G2, April 7, was incorrectly attributed to Ham Steinbach.

The office of the Readers' Editor is closed today. It re-opens tomorrow. Readers may then telephone between 11am and 5pm: 0171 239 9638. Letters can be mailed to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Jackdaw

THE world's first virtual reality traffic jam took place recently at Japan's annual Tokyo Motor Show, serving as an appetiser for the multi-media spectacles available in our own millennium dome in 1999. It was a German car maker, Opel, who, to promote its new top-of-the-range sports car, decided to draw the punters in by offering a test drive — in cyberspace.

Queues snaked around the massive main hall as visitors jostled each other in an attempt to be the first to try out the VR modules. The UFO-shaped wraparound headsets

immersed each user behind the dashboard in a high-definition video world with stereo sound effects. Digital cars raced one another through a pre-programmed route that included motorways, country lanes and inner city "chicken runs". The VR experience was further boosted by vibrating stools and arm rests that simulated the hump and pot-hole as the computer cars sped around the 3-D course. On a road to nowhere, in *Frontiers* magazine.

Fancy a line?

SPORTS are ruled by lines. There are starting lines and finish lines, sidelines and service lines, base lines and goal lines, blood lines and free-throw lines. There are lines that divide foul from fair and lines that are teed by sprinters, picked by skiers, cast by anglers and set by handicappers. Golfers line up putts; their agents, andorsements. Groundkeepers line fields; promoters, their pockets. Some athletes short-

them; most sports writers recycle them. In baseball, managers make out lineups, fielders hug the line, and batters hit drives that, if caught, are called line-outs. In football, linebackers form a second line of defence behind the linemen at the line of scrimmage. It wouldn't be out of line to say that without lines most sports would border on chaos.

From *Sports Illustrated*.

Flying life

THREE of us joined Alex for a day at the north London airfield where Mr James keeps his plane. Alex had convinced us that flying was a terrific pleasure, and also wasn't financially out of reach of the ordinary mortal.

The airfield was like something out of a James Bond film. There must have been over a hundred little planes, in various states of coolness and repair, dotted over this little corner of England. Futuristic curvy ones rubbed shoulders with biplanes. A Lear jet nestled in the dis-

sonality, it would detract from their concentration on his work and the illusions and tricks in it that he was determined to exploit and protect.

In general, the man who had his first radio play accepted when he was 21 was fired only by his own ideas and observations: people who came to him with ideas were usually rewarded with a blank expression. What he needed was his own observations, often of happenings very slight in themselves. Paul Temple, the hero on whom the BBC spent more on a crime series than it had ever done before, was based on a man Durbridge happened to see on a train at Leamington Spa. The sight of a man in a restaurant taking the wrong hat from the pegs

would give him an idea for a plot and from there he worked with a Swiss-watch precision that few of his contemporaries could rival, so that the mere announcement of his name over the airwaves could alert the listener or viewer to the fact that some unique tension was about to develop.

Part of his skill was in latching on to arresting titles, and here he was often inspired by other people. When he made his West End debut as a playwright in 1971 at the tiny Fortune theatre, the play was *Suddenly at Home*. This title fell into his lap when he read an obituary of a friend who had "died suddenly at home". One of his popular television series, was suggested by David Lean's description of the opening of his film *Lawrence of Arabia* as being "as quick as lightning, going like a bat out of hell".

Those who worked closely with Durbridge had a warm view of him. Shaun Sutton, head of BBC TV serials in the late 1960s, said: "We had 46 thriller episodes a year then and Francis would do us a couple a year. He was very approachable. If you got him to a party or reception, he was fairly quiet and did not rush into conversation. He was very unobtrusive as a person, very theatrical in his writing. He did not give his secrets away."

Sutton saw Durbridge as the leader of the mystery writers who replaced the academic detective story writers of the 1930s. John Tydemann, head of BBC radio drama, believed that Durbridge was without peer in the radio thriller and was even more appreciated in other countries where there were once complaints that workers failed to turn up to work — even in Germany — when his serials were on radio or TV.

He is survived by his wife, Norah, and their two sons.

Dennis Barker

Francis Henry Durbridge, dramatist, born November 25, 1912; died April 11, 1998

ance. A couple of insect-like helicopters too. There wasn't the tiniest hint of the impersonal futurism of modern airports. This was a land of goggles, intrepid adventurers and freedom. The Customs hut, for example, was conspicuously unmanned. The only proper building, among the Portakabins and hangars, was the airfield café.

Alex James introduced us to Tony Ryan, his instructor.

the Idler

THE Idler goes flying with Alex from Blair.

No end to it

APOCALYPTIC belief is hard to take seriously. Why? As Marina Benjamin tells us succinctly: "Obvious as it may seem, the first thing to say about the end of the world is that it has not yet happened."

To date, every real, or metaphorical, clock known to man has ticked on blithely past every apocalyptic deadline, and every millennial prophet has, in effect, been exposed as a fool or a liar. Among primitive peoples, the none-fulfillment of prophecy has, on occasion, led to terrifying

convulsions of the social order. In the modern West, however, the chief function of the doomsday prophet has been to keep us amused.

The "Great Disappointment" of 1844, in which thousands of Americans stood on hillsides waiting for the Rapture predicted by William Miller, may have represented the worst outbreak of millennial fever in western history, but it was also the moment at which society decided to file end-time speculation under L for Loony. The Millerites discovered this when they sheepishly crept back to their homes the morning after.

"What not gone up there?" asked their neighbours between gusts of laughter.

Living at the end of the world, by Marina Benjamin, in *Literary Review*.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail Jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4368; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER

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Hannah Pool

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: The best place to be at holiday time, if you don't like crowds, could well be on the Shap Fells. I've never seen anybody about there — nothing but miles of lonely moorland, backed by distant views of Lakeland fells and the North Pennines, with superb skylines, quietly-grazing sheep, perhaps two or three red deer and always plenty of fresh air. We were there the other day, walking from the summit of the Shap Fells road, over the top of Great Variside, to Harrow Pike, the most easterly two-thousanders in Lakeland. There was only a solitary figure by the Grey Gait cairn, and mine was the only car down on the road. In Grassington, the most easterly of the fells, where they would have been fighting for parking spaces. This is, more or less, the start of an interesting walk right across the Lake District from Wadale Head, a ruined farmstead at the entrance to the Westmorland Wadale, just off the main road over Shap Fells.

to the Head, undermeads Great Gable and the Scafells. Leave the rules of the farm at, say, mid-night to do the easy walking during the night hours, and go more or less due west, up hill and down dale, until met by friends with transport and well-deserved refreshment, at probably the Wadale Head Inn. But there are any number of far less-demanding walks around Shap Fells, starting from the main road, including the circumnavigation of Bannisdale, an excellent round, and the little switchback ridge over Robin Hood and Lord's Seat. And the other Borrowdale crosses the former main road to Scotland with splendid walks along its containing ridges and through the valley itself. Beside the tumbling Borrow Beck. Now that heavy lorries have been banished to the M6, the Shap Fells road is a quiet highway, increasing the sense of loneliness, desolation even, of the area.

A HARRY GRIFFIN

East, young r

Indicator

TODAY — The Prime Minister's speech to the House of Commons on the state of the economy. The speech is expected to be a key moment in the government's campaign to win re-election in the general election.

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Let us pay



God goes to Mammon and all hell lets loose

Larry Elliott

IN THE wake of last summer's flurry of building society and insurance company stock market flotations, the City looked around for other mutual organisations that could be "put into play".

The Co-op, the AA and Bupa are all seen as potential targets, but HSBC came up with the ultimate mutual organisation for re-engineering: the Church. It all makes sense for the financial markets. The Church is a strong brand, an instantly recognisable product — religion — and assets in prime locations around the country.

Moreover, for years it has been underperforming, seeing its customer base desert it for the DIY superstores and garden centres. Yesterday was the high point of the Christian calendar, yet it is unlikely that more than one in four adults went to church. Something is going wrong — but nothing that management consultants and focus groups could not put right.

The subtext of all this, however, is that the Church — at least in its present form — is finished. God has been defeated by Mammon, with most people only seeing the inside of a church for a wedding, itself now such an act of conspicuous consumption that for many the extra-

gence of the occasion is more important than the act itself. But how much of this is true? Can man live by bread alone now any more than a hundred or a thousand years ago? Or is there some deep spiritual need still to be satisfied?

If the mass hysteria that followed the death of Diana is anything to go by, there is still a yearning for something to believe in. It is hard, otherwise, to explain the iconography, the collective show of faith and the intolerance of those who refused to grieve in the "correct" way.

At the same time, television is providing its own, warped form of the confessional with talk shows in which, before a baying studio audience, a participant confesses to having sex with the mother-in-law, or some other "sht". Meanwhile, the innocent party is publicly humiliated. The justification for this "entertainment" is that it is giving the punters what they want, presumably in the same way as the citizens of ancient Rome wanted to see Christians tossed to the lions.

In the end, decadence took its toll. Although ancient Rome was technologically advanced and seemed militarily impregnable, by the time it was beset by the Barbarian hordes it had been hollowed out from within. Roman society — the sense of the primacy of the public over the private realm — rotted away, and it was not until 1750 that Europe again had a city of such a size.

During the thousand years between the demise of Rome and the Reformation, the role of the Church changed. It ceased to be a solvent and became the orthodoxy. Having been a force for change in its

early years, the Catholic Church was a force which resisted change.

In his book, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, David Landes argues that there was a link between countries which adopted Protestantism and economic development.

"In manufacturing centres in France and western Germany, Protestants were typically the employers, Catholics the employed."

"In Switzerland, the Protestant cantons were the centres of the export manufacturing industry; the Catholic ones were primarily agricultural."

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endeavour. The Catholic countries, instead of meeting the challenge, responded by closure and censure."

As a result, the events of the 16th century were pivotal in the development of the modern world.

As Tawney put it in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*: "When the age of the Reformation begins, economics is still a branch of ethics, and ethics of theology, all human activities are treated as falling within a single scheme whose character is determined by the spiritual destiny of mankind. The appeal of the church is to natural law, not utility; the legitimacy of economic transactions is tied by reference less to movements of the market than to moral standards derived from the traditional teaching of the Christian Church."

Economic ambitions make good servants but bad masters

He highlights two reasons why the Protestant communities forged ahead — the emphasis on literacy for both boys and girls so that everybody could read the Bible, and the obsession with the management of time.

By contrast, Spain and Portugal lost out because "religious passion and military crusade drove away the outsiders and discouraged the pursuit of the strange and potentially heretical."

"The Protestant Reformation... changed the rules. It gave a boost to literacy, spawned dissent and heresies and promoted the scepticism and refusal of authority at the heart of the scientific

method. The most important mechanism by which the medieval Church exerted economic influence — the idea of the just wage and the ban on usury — were quickly swept away and religion was converted "from the keystone which held together the social edifice into one department within it, and the idea of the rule of right is replaced by economic expediency as the arbiter of policy and the criterion of conduct."

Tawney's warning in 1922 is, if anything, even more pertinent today, when the market is treated as a god, and the high priests of the new orthodoxy are the technocrats who run multinational corporations.

the global entertainment industry and systems of economic management.

The Church's role has also changed, moving once again from that of insider to outsider, from defender of the orthodoxy to champion of the poor and dispossessed. It was the Church of England which warned in the 1980s of the damage to the social fabric being caused by Thatcherism, and churches of all denominations are at the forefront of the Jubilee 2000 coalition for debt relief for the most impoverished nations.

That is not to say the Church is becoming a revolutionary vanguard. The events of the past 500 years show not only that capitalism has been instrumental in the increase in living standards since the Middle Ages, but also that it knows how to survive.

But those who write off religion and faith do so at their peril. Organised religion has shown great staying power, and it is perhaps telling that those searching for a "third way" in politics are harnessing the power of the Church to do so. There is a recognition that Tawney was right when he said that economic ambitions make good servants but bad masters.

"Harnessing to a social purpose they will turn the mill and grind the corn," Tawney said. "But the question, to what and the wheels revolve, still remains; and on that question the native and uncritical worship of economic power, which is the mood of unreason too often engendered in those whom the new Leviathan has hypnotised by its spell, sheds no light."

The Wealth and Poverty of Nations is published by Little, Brown on April 22.

IMF bandwagon may crush poor

Debate
Duncan Green

DEREGULATION and liberalisation are the watchwords of global economic managers as they jet between their endless round of seminars and negotiations at the IMF, the G8 or the World Trade Organisation.

Now, however, the Asian economic crisis has rekindled debate about the wisdom of allowing foreign capital to flow into and out of developing economies unchecked. The outcome will be crucial to the Third World's economic future.

Of the three liberalisations — trade, foreign direct investment and financial — opening economies to unrestricted flows of finance capital in the form of stocks and shares, bonds and bank loans seems to be the hardest for Third World countries to cope with. Not only the Third World, either, as the collapse of sterling in 1992 demonstrated. There is near consensus that a common factor behind the crises in Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia was rapid financial liberalisation which allowed short-term capital to pour in during the early 1990s. When it turned tail last year, the stampede of departing capital destroyed the currencies and with them the much-vaunted "Asian miracle".

World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz has said: "Financial markets do not do a good job of selecting the most productive recipients of funds, or of monitoring the use of funds."

There may be agreement on the dangers of recklessly opening up financial markets, but there is a fierce argument about the proper response. Aid agencies, research think-tanks and many academics argue for slowing or

stopping the process of financial deregulation. Many want re-regulation, especially of short-term capital flows. Their unlikely allies include hedge-fund operator George Soros, who says: "To argue that the financial markets in general, and international lending in particular, need to be regulated is likely to outrage the financial community. Yet the evidence for just that is overwhelming."

There are several proposals on the table, such as the Tobin tax — a 0.25 per cent levy on every international capital transaction, which would deter short-term speculative flows in favour of longer-term investment. Many Third World governments are also

Argument may seem arcane but stakes in human terms are high

taking a hard look at Chile's insistence that 30 per cent of any loan or bank deposit from abroad must be placed, interest-free, in the central bank for a year. In practice this acts like a national Tobin tax, favouring longer-term and direct investment.

The IMF and G8, on the other hand, say the answer is to push ahead with financial deregulation, while making countries better able to withstand capital surges into and out of their economies by strengthening their banking systems and improving transparency. In March, the Fund's managing director, Michel Camdessus, insisted that the problem was not that countries had opened their capital accounts. "Their difficulties arose from the macro-economic environment and institutional setting in which they opened up their capital accounts." In other words,

blame their domestic systems, not the markets.

The Fund argues for an amendment to its constitution, the Articles of Agreement, to make promoting financial liberalisation one of its central aims. The Asia crisis seems to have made the regulators speed up their efforts. The G8 finance ministers' meeting in London in February concluded that "a capital account amendment to the IMF Articles should be implemented quickly".

There will be further pressure at the Fund's meeting in Washington this week.

Until now, the main arena for the deregulation effort has been the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which is bogged down in negotiation at the rich nations' club, the OECD. If the amendment succeeds, the baton of deregulation will pass to the IMF, where the G8 governments control 48 per cent of votes on the IMF board. The Fund is notoriously impervious to criticism or new ideas, and once financial deregulation is placed at the heart of its mission it will be hard to stop the liberalisation bandwagon's advance.

The IMF has promised not to push financial deregulation until countries are ready for it. But the Fund's neo-classical ideology sees deregulation as inherently beneficial, creating the demand for use of capital. If able to demand deregulation, it will give short shrift to doubters in the Third World.

The debate may seem arcane, but the human stakes are high. The Asian crisis has wiped out up to 10 million jobs, and poverty and hunger are on the rise across the region. The IMF could exacerbate Third World economies' vulnerability to the sickle flows of global capital, sowing the seeds of currency collapses and economic crisis.

Duncan Green is a policy adviser at Cafod, the Catholic aid agency.

Economics made easy

What has happened to the pound?

After sterling dropped out of the exchange rate mechanism in September 1992 it bumped along quite happily at about 2.50 German marks. In the middle of 1996 it started behaving as if it was on steroids, powering through its old ERM value and settling at about 3 marks. Last week it touched DM3.10, its highest value for 10 years.

Why?

One reason is that UK interest rates are the highest in Europe so lots of overseas investors are buying the pound, pushing up

Why does strong sterling weaken Britain's exports? CHARLOTTE DENNY blazes a trail through the forex forest

its value. It is also attractive to investors who are nervous about the start of monetary union in 11 European countries in January next year.

Why are they worried?

The mark, which is the most important currency of those fixing their exchange rates, has always been a strong currency — it tends to increase in value against other currencies. Investors are not convinced that the euro — the new single currency — will be as strong as the mark so they are selling the German currency and buying the pound. Sterling is not going to be part of monetary union at the start.

Isn't having a strong currency a good thing?

Exporters do not like it. The price of British goods rises for foreign customers when their currencies decline against the pound. This makes it hard for British firms to sell goods abroad.

What is the solution?

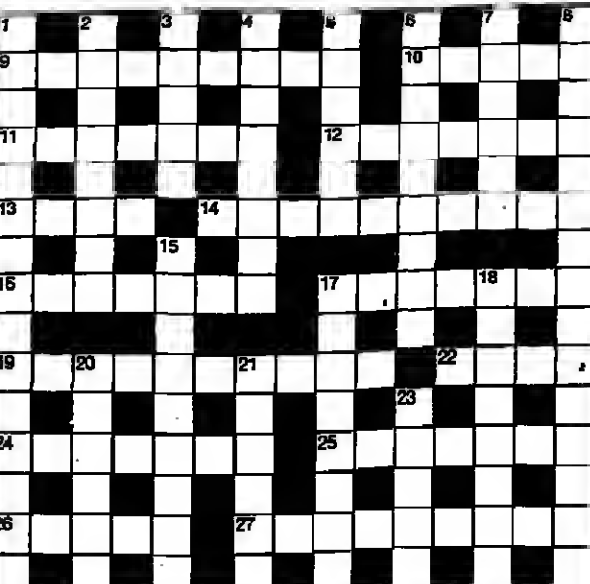
Some people think the Bank of England should start cutting interest rates quickly so the pound becomes less attractive. But the Bank's job is to get inflation down to the Government's target — not to worry about the level of the pound or what it is doing to manufacturing. In fact, they want Britain's tradeable sector to suffer because that is thought to be the only way to slow the economy using interest rates.

So they want to see exports falling and unemployment rising?

Well, the Bank would not put it like that but it would be a sign that the economy has slowed to its sustainable rate of growth and that it can start thinking about cutting interest rates.

Guardian Crossword No 21,247

Set by Rufus



- Across**
- 9 Young cricket side bound to succeed (8)
 - 10 Take it and go (5)
 - 11 Form of station that may be out short (7)
 - 12 Sign of repentance in spring? (3,4)
 - 13 A course taken abroad (4)
 - 14 Cities laid out in a way that's impractical (10)
 - 15 Cuts in the middle of Greece produce blackout (7)
 - 17 Teach new student to be morally correct (7)
 - 19 Map soldiers employ to find a monastery (10)
 - 22 Journey in South Africa (4)
 - 24 Grave words for those who are late (7)
 - 25 Dives again in regal fashion (7)
- Down**
- 1 It will be worth money in the future (9,6)
 - 2 Nevertheless last (5,3)
 - 3 Wet branch (5)
 - 4 Move idle dogs and put out (8)
 - 5 Turkish leader about to conclude business (8)
 - 6 Boxer of cunning and power (9)
 - 7 An innate ability to make money (6)
 - 8 Just the same, it can't be bettered (7,6)
 - 15 One at centre of tiff with friend concerning room (8)

Winners of Prize Puzzle 21,246

This week's winners of a Collins English Dictionary are Dr M P Steward of Enfield, Middlesex, W Menn of Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, Sue King of Liverpool, J A Robinson of Beverly, East Yorkshire, and Miss S D Ullmann of Leeds.

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ASFP RST

Go East, young man? Book a return ticket

Worm's eye
Dan Atkinson

GRATITUDE seems in just as short a supply as money in the Far East these days. If news of Malaysia's enormous crackdown on illegal immigrants is anything to go by. For years, these illicit workers have provided not only a shadow labour force, but also the means whereby Malaysia's roaring credit boom was prevented from spilling over into roaring wage inflation.

Without them, the lid would have blown off the Malaysian miracle much earlier. Indeed, the ghost workers may be said to have been responsible for all those glowing international reports suggesting that, of all the tigers, Malaysia burned the brightest. Now they have the con-

stantly on their backs and face a swift march to the nearest ferry back to Indonesia or wherever.

That's not only not gratitude, it's no way to say goodbye.

Nevertheless, there must be those wondering if once again the Far Easters haven't worked out yet another refinement of the capitalist model. Any fool can bring about free movement of capital, but free movement of labour has always been restricted by barriers of language, culture and immigration legislation.

What if it were possible to have the surplus labour force off to a separate jurisdiction and call upon it only when required? That would give a whole new dimension to the idea of flexible working practices.

Well, not entirely new. Germany has famously had a large pool of mainly Turkish "guest workers" upon which to draw, and pre-Mandela South Africa was particularly pioneering in this regard. The surplus workers were given groovy bits of the country and told to create their own

sovereign state. Few could other than South Africa recognised these states and the whole thing fell apart.

That said, the Malaysian experiment takes the whole thing a stage further. George Orwell predicted a future in which three enormous states fought for control of an enormous reservoir of cheap labour in the Third World. That these states seemed quite happy for the war to last indefinitely suggests they may have had an early imagination of labour-market eco-

nomics, Malaysian-style. The point about the reservoir is that it is outside the jurisdiction of the new city-state and, thus, its workforce has no call upon welfare and other services in the place in which it works.

The name of the game is not to control this vast pool of cheap labour, but to draw upon it when necessary and to show ruthlessness in flushing surplus workers back into the pool when no longer required.

Go East, young man? Maybe, but book a return ticket.

Indicators

TODAY — **EU**: Public holiday.
GER: Retail prices in week (Feb).
GER: Wholesale prices in week (Mar).
JP: M2+CD (Mar).
TOMORROW — **UK**: Producer prices (Mar).
US: Retail sales (Mar).
US: Consumer prices (Mar).

WEDNESDAY — **UK**: Minutes from March MPC meeting.
JP: Industrial production (Feb).
THURSDAY — **GER**: Bundesbank Council Meeting.
FRIDAY — **US**: Industrial production (Mar).
US: International trade (Feb).

Tourist rates — bank sells

Australia 2.478	Germany 2.264	Malaysia 6.16	Singapore 2.81
Austria 20.82	Greece 520.09	Malta 0.541	South Africa 8.20
Belgium 61.00	Hong Kong 12.61	Netherlands 3.322	Spain 248.54
Canada 2.325	India 66.01	New Zealand 2.95	Sweden 12.91
Cyprus 0.989	Ireland 1.175	Norway 12.29	Switzerland 2.461
Denmark 11.35	Israel 6.13	Portugal 303.25	Turkey 386.10
Finland 9.066	Italy 2.947	Saudi Arabia 6.17	US 1.637
France 5.904			

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in Argentina
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The Guardian Sport

Monday April 13 1998

www.football.guardian.co.uk

The US Masters

Nerves on edge as the final act unwinds

David Davies sees Fred Couples begin his bid for a second Green Jacket

FREDDIE COUPLES had the chance to go for greatness — at least in his own mind — in the final round at the Augusta National Golf Club yesterday. Coupled with the overnight leader by two shots from Paul Azinger, Phil Mickelson and Mark O'Meara, felt that, while one major championship was worthy, it took two to prove something.

After his third round 69 he said: "I consider myself to be a very good golfer. I don't think I'm great. But I'm right where I want to be in this tournament and, if I can win it, I'll be the happiest guy in the world. To win once, you're a good player; to win twice, well, that's a big deal."

One player with no chance of a big deal, and hardly a chance of even a small deal, was last week's hero, Lee Westwood. Last Sunday the Westwood man was celebrating winning the New Orleans Classic, a week later he was struggling, seemingly in vain, to make the top 24 of the field that gets an automatic invitation to return to Augusta.

Overnight he was tied for 38th, with only three players beneath him, and needed a strong finish to get into the elite top two dozen. But the

spark which illuminated his play last week had been largely quenched this week and rounds of 74, 76 and 72 are certainly not the kind of scores of which he is capable. Yesterday he began with a bogey on the hole which, statistically, has been the hardest all week, and further bogeys at the 3rd and 8th meant he was out in 39, three over par and instead of improving his position was sliding down the field.

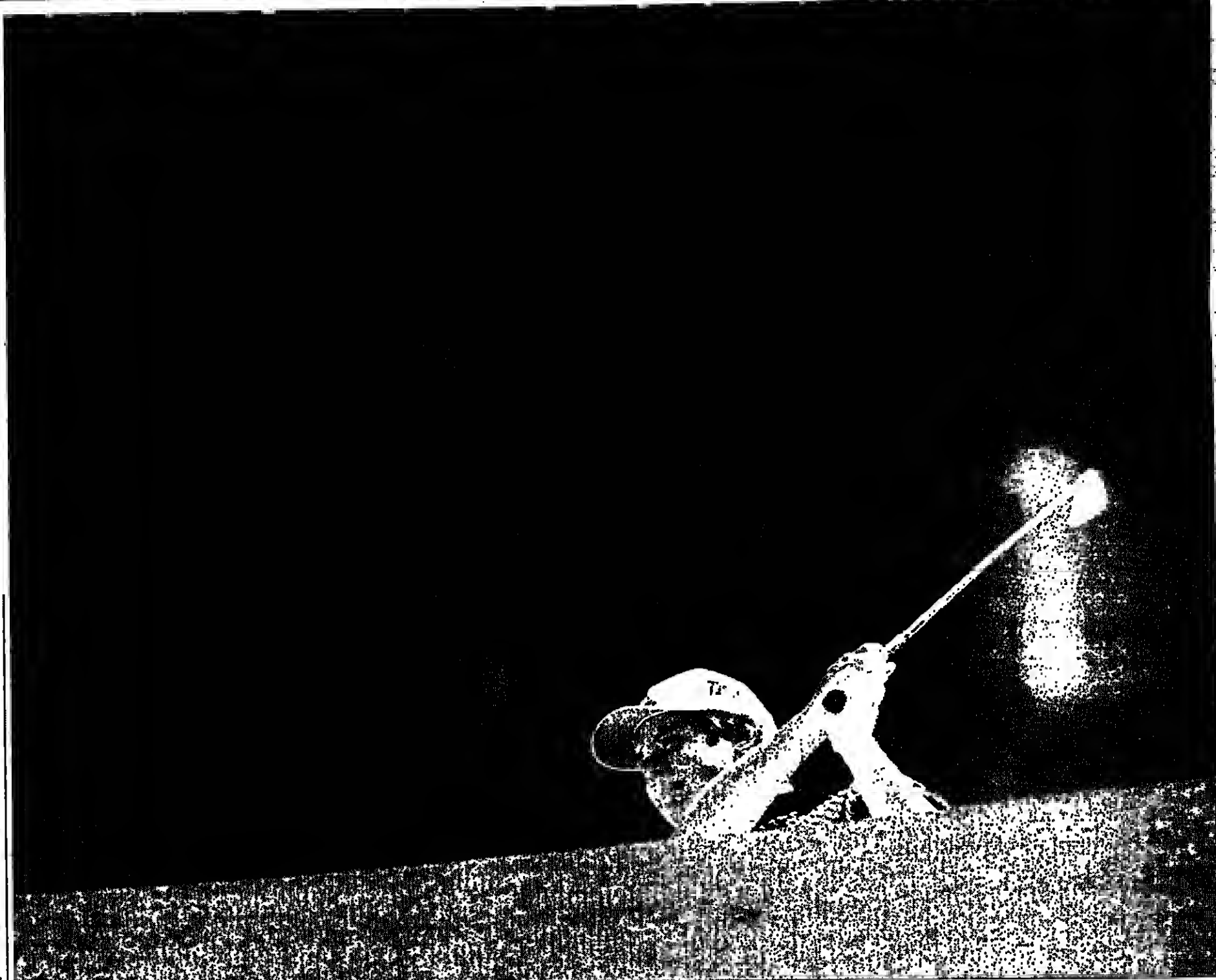
There were only two Europeans in the top 10, Jose Maria Olazabal, who was two under, four behind Couples, and Colin Montgomerie at one under. For both of them it was something of a breakthrough.

The Spaniard has survived despite a bulky driver, using his expert short game to fashion 10 birdies during the three rounds.

Montgomerie, on the other hand, is gradually convincing himself that he can play Augusta, even with a game that is based on a left-to-right flight on a course that has a predominance of right-to-left dog-legs.

All it took was a wind. After Tiger roared round Augusta last year in 16 under par, a record, the talk was all about leotightening, strengthening the National course. Some people advocated growing rough, others putting in cross bunkers, to snare the man who was making the world's most famous golf course look silly.

But all it took was a wind. It blew cold and strong for the



Keeping his head up... a struggling Lee Westwood plays out of a bunker on the first fairway during the Masters final round at Augusta yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW REDINGTON

first two days of the 1998 edition of the US Masters, and suddenly the teeth belonged not to Tiger but to the golf course. And how it bit. Augusta is only 6,925 yards long — short for a championship course these days — but the first 36 holes the field averaged a score of 75.47, essentially 3½ strokes over par.

To achieve that, every hole but three of the par-fives played harder than its par and the scoring returned to sanity. The Masters authorities, who decided on a wait-and-see policy, were vindicated: no one has made a fool of their course this year.

Even after three rounds, following a Saturday of sunshine and calm, the scoring average was 74.55 and Couples, far from having the nine-stroke cushion enjoyed by Woods last year, had only that two-stroke lead.

Furthermore Couples was only six under par, against the 15-under that Woods had compiled, and going into the final round it was possible to believe that any one of 16 players had a chance of winning the Green Jacket. Last

year there was only Woods, to the extent that Montgomerie said, with some conviction: "Tiger is going to win and he will win by more than nine shots."

When asked how he could be so sure, especially with the memory of Greg Norman losing a six-stroke lead and turning it into a five-stroke deficit to Nick Faldo in 1996, Montgomerie, with characteristic bluntness, said: "Tiger is not Greg Norman, and Greg Norman is not Tiger."

And therein lies the point. There is no doubting that

Woods may well win the Masters again in the manner he enjoyed in 1997. For Tiger, at his best, is capable of destroying any golf course. But that is not, and should not be, a reason for toughening it artificially.

It would be decidedly unfair to install hazards on any course specifically designed to hamper one or two men in the field. To put in cross bunkers, for example, at 300 yards from the tee, would penalise only Woods and John Daly, the two longest hitters in any field. Best leave well

alone and let nature do the protection; and, if that means that Woods fulfils the Jack Nicklaus prediction and wins more Masters than Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer combined, 10, then that will be a proper reward for his skills, and amen to that.

Nicklaus, of course, is one of the 16 players who, in theory, have a chance of winning this year. And yet he almost did not play and had to be leaned on by the Augusta National chairman Jackson Stephens to turn up. Nicklaus said before the tournament

started: "I told Jackson last year that it may have been my last year as a competitive golfer. He said, 'do me a favour and do it one more year, we'd like to do something special for you', so I said: 'Sure, I'll do that.'"

The something special was a ceremony honouring, in the form of a plaque, his 40 years of participation in the Masters; a ceremony that may have sparked something in Nicklaus to produce the golf he has this week. He has always sworn he would never be a purely ceremonial golfer.

Unflappable Jack still doing the rounds

Helen Smyth finds Nicklaus full of life at 58 as the Golden Bear picks up an old scent

IT WAS Jack Nicklaus Day at Augusta National and, on the occasion of his 49th consecutive Masters appearance, they dedicated a plaque to the man who has won more Green Jackets, six, and won more major championships, 18, than anyone.

Last Tuesday was full of emotion and even Nicklaus shed a tear or two as he indulged in the alien practice of choking, something that never happens on a golf course. "I guess I just got a little more nostalgic than I intended to," he said.

At the age of 58, Nicklaus is entitled to be a ceremonial golfer: milking the applause, acknowledging the adulation and going home early. He is a near-mythical being whom fathers, unborn when the then Fat Jack won his first Masters in 1959, show their sons who, in turn, were not born when the older Golden Bear won his last in 1986. They worship him for the golfer he was and the icon he has become. A past Master.

No one, not even Nicklaus, expected him to

mount a serious challenge from the senior quarter. Admittedly, he watched his 1986 victory before travelling to Augusta but it was only because it was being shown on some television channel or other. Characteristically, he said he wanted to check out a few technical points — swing details and the like. "That's all I was looking at," he stressed. "I didn't pay much attention to the sentiment part."

He obviously paid close attention to the playing part because, after three rounds, there he was on the leaderboard with scores of 73, 72 and 70, one under par, only five shots behind Fred Couples and sharing

10th place with Colin Montgomerie, Ernie Els and Tiger Woods.

Nicklaus has been extravagant in his praise of Woods's extravagant talent, suggesting that the defending champion was capable of surpassing the 10 Masters titles that he and Arnold Palmer have hoovered up between them.

On Saturday the 23-year-old Woods was mutually in awe of Nicklaus's current performance. "People have no idea how good an accomplishment that is for someone who's 58, especially out here at this golf course. It's unbelievable. There's a little stat where, age 28, you're at your prime physically and after that you lose

one per cent of your motor skills per year if you don't work out. So for him doing what he's doing at his age, that's pretty impressive."

Nicklaus, who was paired with Els in the final round, has to work out because he has trouble with his back and has a bad hip, but he said: "I'm doing pretty well and basically I'm as functional as I've been in a long time."

He has that old, almost forgotten scent of the chase in his nostrils too, and was irritated at squandering good birdie chances on the front nine on Saturday, while conceding he holed "a good few putts coming home", including a 25-footer for a par at the last.

He was initially cautious about his chances of winning but warmed to the idea. "Experience here means an awful lot," he said, "but I normally would not think I would give the guys that much of a run for their money. Whether I will, I don't know but I feel good about my golf game for a change and that's a big thing."

"I think the competitor inside me says, 'Jack, I don't care what age you are, I don't care who's out in front, I'm a competitor that can still play and win'. Whether that's realistic, I've got to think that way. Otherwise I wouldn't be here. That's just the way I am."



Up to par... Nicklaus enjoys a 25-foot, third-round finale

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